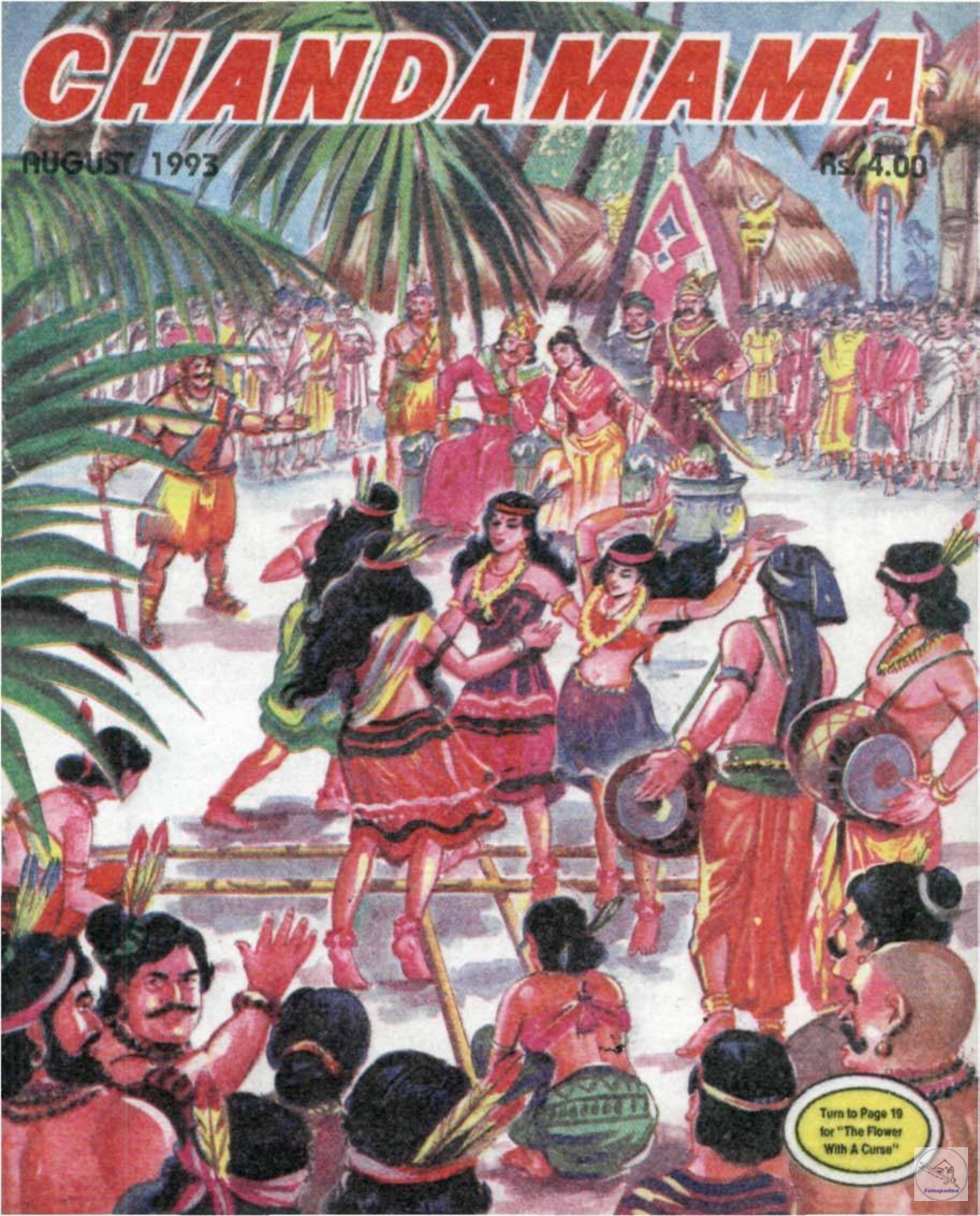


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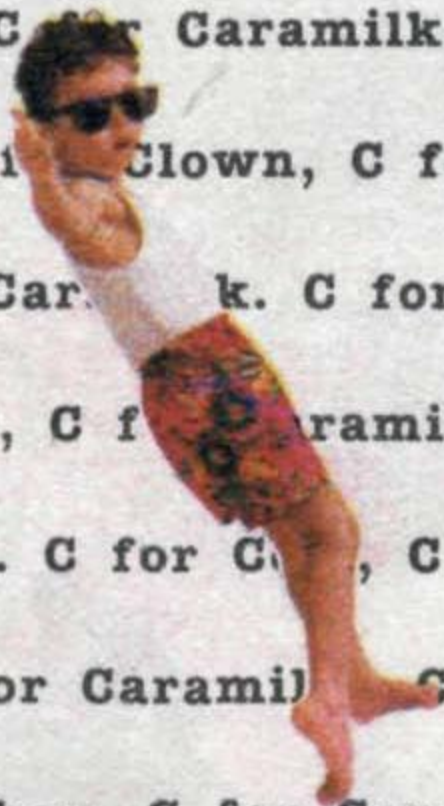
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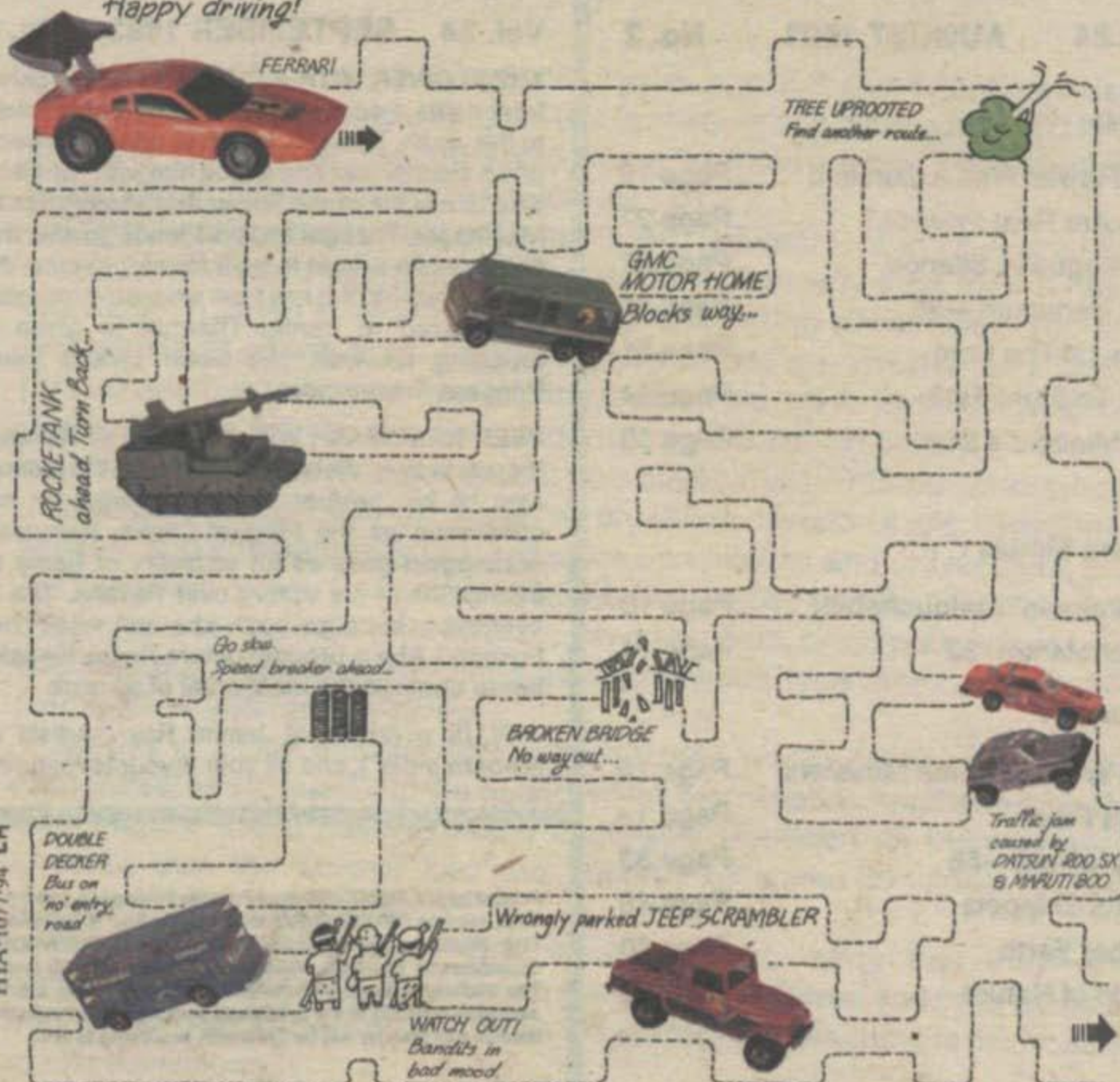
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CHANDAMAMA

IN THIS ISSUE

Vol. 24 AUGUST 1993 No. 2

Stories:

The Flower With a Curse-5	...Page 19
Who Are Real Friends?	...Page 27
A Dialogue In Silence	...Page 37
Veer Hanuman—35	...Page 41
Voice Of The Lord	...Page 51
How To Fight Fat?	...Page 54
The Minister's Son	...Page 60

Picture Stories :

A "Brahmin" Untouchable!	...Page 13
Panchatantra-32	...Page 14

Features :

Two Women Prime Ministers	...Page 10
News Flash	...Page 12
Supplement—58	...Page 33
Sports Snippets	...Page 48
Mother Earth	...Page 50
World of Nature	...Page 63

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 24 SEPTEMBER 1993 No. 3

THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE : The Tangkhul tribe holds a community dinner to bid farewell to the youth, Thangal, who has offered to track down the monster and entice him with "Shatabdika" if it is the exotic flower that attracts him to Maninagar. Thangal and his friends go after the flower while a boat is built for him to take the flowers out into the sea from where the monster is believed to come. Thangal is given a touching farewell. His sister Laisna joins Princess Priyamvada.

VEER HANUMAN : With the death of Ravana, the war is over. Vibhishana performs the funeral rites of his brother. It is now time for his coronation as the King of Lanka. Hanuman once again goes as an emissary of Rama to inform Sita of his victory over Ravana. Sita is overjoyed, because soon she can rejoin her husband. She is brought before Rama. He asks her to undergo the most cruel of all tests.

PLUS a profile of Jamini Roy ("Artists of Modern India"), and all your favourite features.

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Controlling Editor :
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NOBLEST PROFESSION—IS IT?

Six hundred thousand students of 14 years age in Britain and Wales were unable to take a 90-minute English test in reading and writing that was fixed for June 7. Reason: Teachers belonging to three unions boycotted the examination. Rather disturbing news, isn't it?

This new test was thought of by the British Government as an exercise to be undertaken two years before the students normally took their A-level examination when they are 16 and prior to entering universities. The test was aimed at giving them an opportunity to decide whether they would pursue another two years of study to take them to the A-level examination. Depending on the result, some students might have left school studies, to train themselves in a trade or to take up a suitable job. This would also have meant less strain on schools, vis-a-vis children between 14 and 16 and their studies, and consequently less pressure on colleges and universities, too.

It can more or less be guessed that the Government would not have taken any unilateral decision without consulting teachers, principals, academics, and parents. After all, conducting an examination on a mass scale needs man-power and money-power.

We are told that the teachers, who decided not to cooperate with the authorities, had argued that the pattern of the examination had flaws, and the examination would have imposed excessive workload on themselves. It appears that the unions had the support of some principals, school governors, and even parents.

Barring them, everybody else would be only sorry that they—the boycotting teachers—did not have the welfare of children and their future at the back of their mind. And this when we are told that teaching is the noblest of all professions.

Let us all shed a tear.

TWO WOMEN PRIME MINISTERS



Recently, two countries chose women as their Prime Ministers. On June 14, Mrs. Tansu Ciller was sworn in as Turkey's first woman Prime Minister. Twelve days later, Miss Kim Campbell became Canada's 19th Prime Minister—the first woman to hold that post.

In Turkey, on the sudden death of President Turgut Ozal in April, Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel succeeded him in May, and the ruling True Path Party was asked to elect a new leader to head the Government. Mrs. Ciller (47 years) who was Economics Minister in the Demirel Cabinet, was pitted against the older (65 years) Interior Minister, Mr. Ismet Sezgin, who polled only 320 votes against the 574 votes in favour of the younger candidate. The most surprising element was that Mrs. Ciller's political career was hardly three years old, while Mr. Sezgin had spent nearly 40 years in public life.

After graduating in Economics from Bosphorus University, Mrs. Ciller pursued her studies in Yale University, in the U.S.A., and later worked as Associate Professor (from 1978) and Professor (1983) in various universities in Turkey. In 1990, she joined the True Path Party and was picked by Prime Minister Demirel who made her the Chief Economics Minister. During the 20 months she held the post from 1991, she made a mark by introducing radical reforms in Turkey's trade practices and bringing in improvements in the working of the stock exchange. She particularly endeared herself to the youth of the country and also the women population.

Despite the fact that a majority of the ruling party members in the parliament is above 50 years and male-dominated, they opted for the younger woman candidate to hold the Prime Minister's post. Mrs. Ciller's election, thus, is a milestone in Turkey's history, denoting a smooth transfer of power to a younger generation. It may not surprise many if she were to attempt changing the image of her country.

Canada, too, is fortunate in getting a younger Prime Minister. Miss Kim Campbell is only 46. She started her career as a lawyer in Vancouver and joined the ruling Progressive Conservative Party, in which she reached the top in just about five years. The Prime Minister, Mr. Brian Mulroney, appointed her first as his Justice Minister and, in January last, made her the first woman to hold the Defence portfolio.

The succeeding months, however, saw Mr. Mulroney's popularity taking a nose-dive. The country's economy was shattered because of a huge trade deficit; the national debt was rising; unemployment had become acute, and business houses were closing down one after the other. In the wake of all this came the ref-



erendum, which rejected the Government proposal to amend the Constitution (see *Chandamama*, April 1993). Mr Mulroney then decided to resign without waiting to complete his second term of five years; the ruling party had thus to choose a leader to take his place.

In the elections held on June 13, Miss Campbell received nearly 53 per cent of the votes against the 47 per cent polled by her main rival, Environment Minister Jean Charest. Her success was ensured only in the second round, when the other candidate, Mr. Jim Edwards, who had finished third in the first round, extended his support to her.

Canada, which follows the British Parliamentary system, will now go for general elections in November and if the Conservative Party romps home, Miss Campbell is certain to continue as the country's Prime Minister. After Mr. Pierre Trudeau quit as Prime Minister ten years ago, his Liberal Party has remained in the Opposition.

It is jocularly said that Canadians are envious of the U.S.A. which has a young President in Bill Clinton. This was partly responsible for Miss Campbell's election, as her countrymen were equally keen to have a new younger generation of leaders. She falls in the same age bracket as President Clinton; she plays the guitar while President Clinton enjoys playing the saxophone; she is also an avid chess player and fond of Russian literature. She is thus eminently qualified to retain her post in the November elections.

World's Women Prime Ministers:

- Mrs. Golda Meir of Israel • Mrs. Indira Gandhi of India • Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka • Mrs. Margaret Thatcher of Britain • Mrs. Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan • Begum Khalida Zia of Bangladesh • Ms. Hanna Suchocka of Poland.



NEWS FLASH

Longest day

We were all asleep at midnight on June 30/July 1. Not the scientists at the National Physical Laboratory in New Delhi, who were awake to attend to a very important task—to correct the atomic clock in the Laboratory by a second. At the stroke of midnight, they put back the clock by one second because, according to their



calculations, the earth was slowing down its rotation by that much time. If the time had not been corrected then, the astronomical time and the time on our wrist watches would have been different when we woke up the next morning! Perhaps we did not realise all this when we corrected our time as we listened to the beep-beep signal on the radio or watched the digital time on the TV. We went through a similar exercise 11 years ago—on June 30, 1972 which, for the first time, became the longest (longer by 1 second) day in history!

An Escape for Earth

An asteroid mass weighing some 6,000 tonnes hurtled down to earth at a fiery speed of 48,000 miles per hour. Fortunately for all of us, it did not hit the earth. When it came 90,000 miles



near the earth, it plunged through the atmosphere, and earth was saved! Because, if it had hit the earth, it would have caused considerable damage to life on earth. This happened on May 20, and nobody knew, except two astronomers of the American Astronomical Society. Their main work is hunting asteroids!

Caught in Space

When the American space shuttle "*Endeavour*" went into space on June 21, it was the 56th shuttle launch by the U.S.A. But this time, it was going on a unique mission. Two of the six astronauts aboard the shuttle went for a space walk on the fifth day of their 8-day mission and caught the European research satellite, "*Eureca*", and tucked it into the cargo bay of *Endeavour*. *Eureca* had been put into orbit some 10 months ago and was believed to have collected the results of several experiments.

A 'Brahmin' Untouchable!

Bhim Rao was born into a poor untouchable family of Mahar caste in Mahu, in present-day Madhya Pradesh, on April 14, 1891. He was the son of Ramji Sackpal, a Subedar in the army, and Bhim Bai. When Ramji retired in 1893, the family shifted to Bombay, where Bhim Rao had his early education.

In the school, he and his brother were made to sit in a corner of the classroom. Their classmates had been strictly instructed not to go anywhere near them or touch them. Why, the teachers would not even put questions to them lest they were polluted!

But not all the teachers. There was a Brahmin teacher who was especially fond of Bhim Rao. When the boy was going into high school classes, he added his own surname to his. Ambedkar!

After high school, Bhim Rao wanted to pursue his studies and knew that without a scholarship he would not be able to join a college. Another Brahmin teacher came to his rescue. K.A. Keluskar took Bhim Rao to the Maharaja of Baroda, who granted him a scholarship. Bhim Rao graduated with flying colours.

After graduation, he received another scholarship from the Maharaja that enabled him to join the Columbia University in the U.S.A., where he experienced an atmosphere free from the oppressive social system back at home, which he had to suffer again when he joined the service of the Maharaja as Military Secretary. It appears, his subordinates would not place papers and files on his table; they would, instead, fling them from a distance! The Dewan, pleaded inability to improve matters and allowed Ambedkar to resign. He then vowed: "If I fail to do away with this inhuman injustice ... I will put an end to my life with a bullet." He decided to devote his energy to uplift the crores of untouchables in the country.

Dr. Ambedkar is known as the 'father' of India's Constitution. He did not fully succeed in his life's mission till he and his followers numbering a million embraced Buddhism in October 1956—an event that created a record in history. He passed away two months later.





In the presence of the sovereign, ministers should neither whisper to nor smile at others.
—Thirukkural



If idleness takes up its abode in a king of high birth, it will make him a slave of his enemies.



The fool who refuses precious advice does, of his own accord, a great injury to himself.



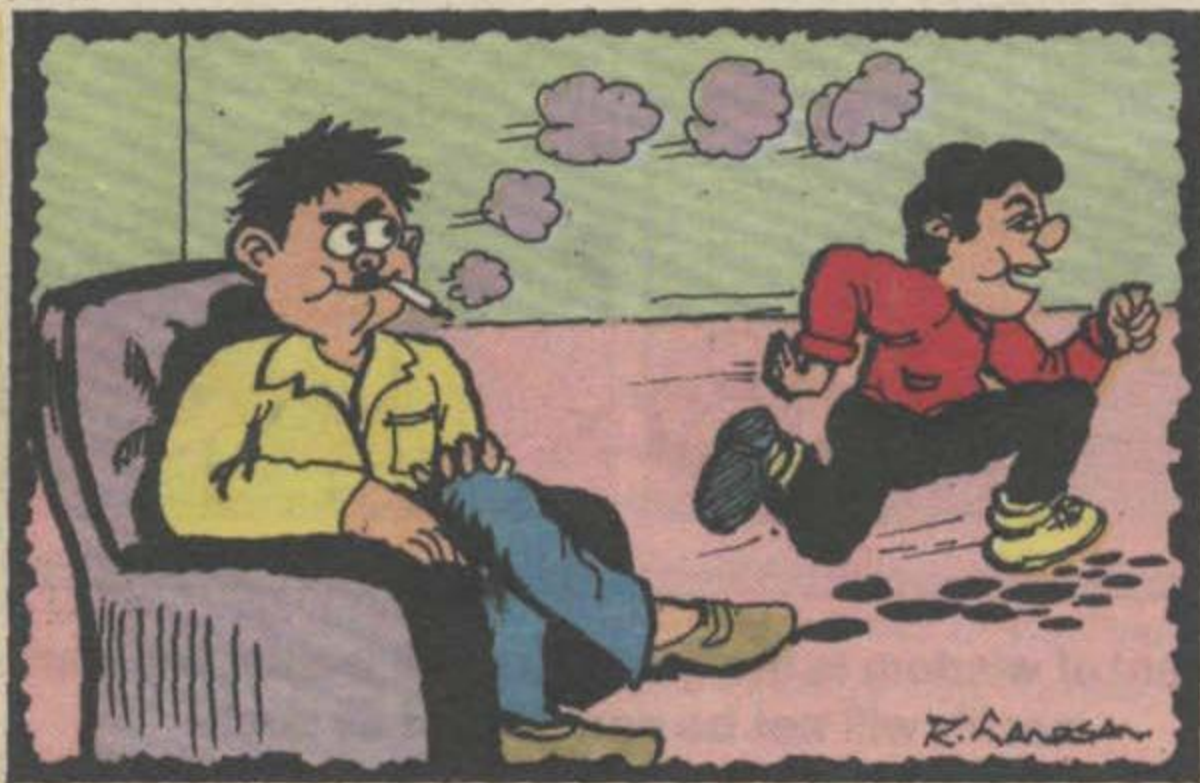
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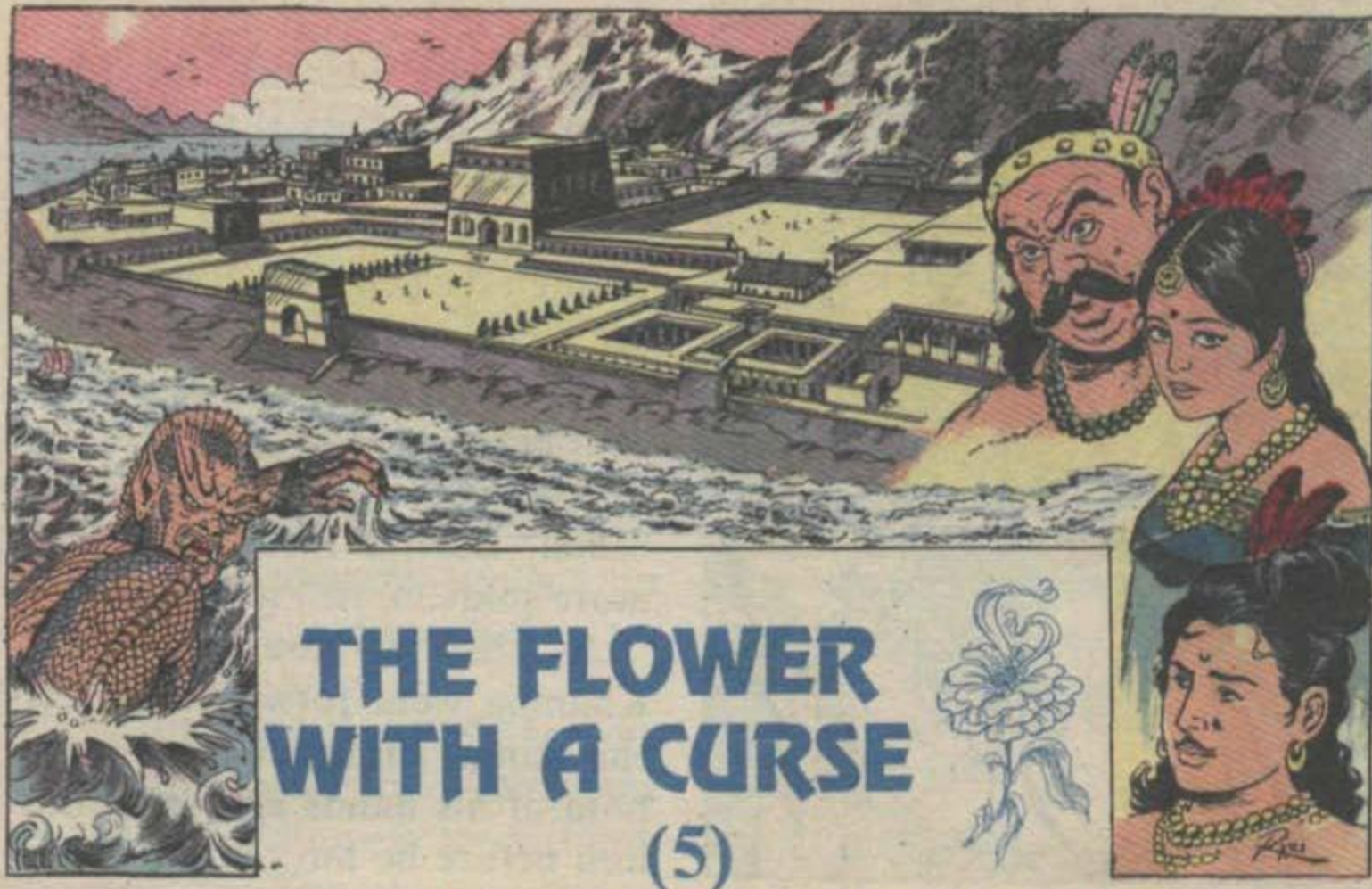
The want of wisdom is the greatest of all wants; the want of wealth will not be considered as such.

Duck—but don't sit!

Reader K.V.S. Bhaskar, of Kodigenhalli, Karnataka, was going through his morning paper. On the Sports page, a heading worried him. It mentioned the name of a well-known batsman, calling him "a sitting duck". Bhaskar read through the whole report, but never for once did he find reference to a duck or, for that matter, any other bird. True, the write-up cautioned the batsman about his stance, about his drive, saying he would easily be out lbw or caught in the slips, and advising him to be careful. The expression "a sitting duck", when it refers to a person, only means that he or she is vulnerable to attack or can become an easy target, a helpless victim. Compare the expression with "sitting pretty", which means the person is in a favourable position.

Soudagam Lakshmikanth of Bishnupur, Manipur, has a suggestion. Referring to the statutory warning on cigarette packets and cigarette advertisements, "Smoking is injurious to health", he asks whether the sentence could not have been shortened to "Smoking injures health". Both may be grammatically correct and mean the same, yet the first one 'sounds' like a warning, a caution, while the other is a statement made with certainty. This is a statutory warning, and the expression had been coined by those in authority and has been in use for several years. For that matter, "Smoking is harmful" will be still simpler. Though the warning is meant for people who use cigarettes, the latest theory, as everybody knows, is smoking harms even those who sit near the smoker, and who thus inhale the smoke! How can *they* be warned? "Run away from a smoker"?





(A monster in Maninagar? King Pratapavarma wonders whether the soldiers sent to guard the southern parts can be believed at all. Gambhir Singh, accompanied by Veer Singh, goes in search of the prowler and comes face to face with the monster. He surmises that he makes his presence on land only at night and goes back to the sea before dawn, and that something in the north is attracting him there. The Raj Guru feels that it is the accursed flower that draws the monster. The king decides to meet the tribals in the northern hill ranges and seek their help.)

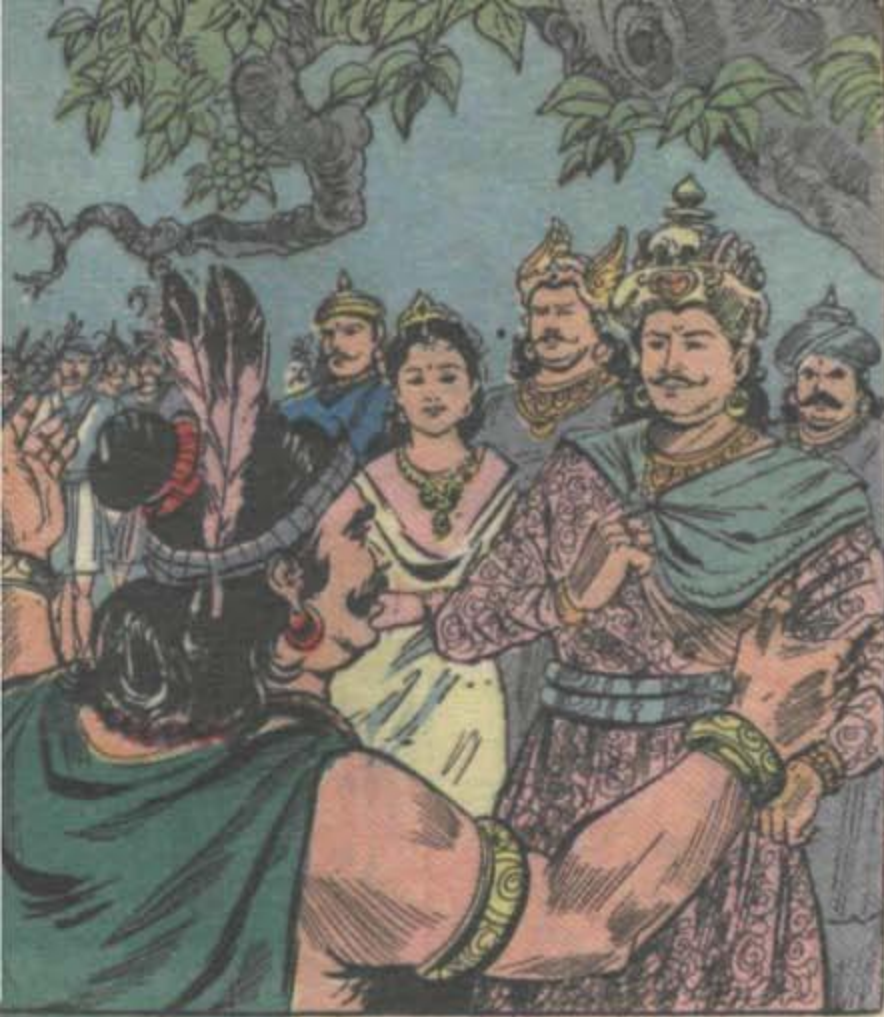
Long before King Pratapavarma reached the Nungmai region, a royal messenger had gone ahead to inform the Tangkhul tribe, of the ruler's visit. The tribal chief, Khamba, ordered the sounding of the drums calling his people to gather at the open plateau at the entrance to the hills.

Soon after they had gathered, Khamba told them why he had called them. To their memory, it was for the first ever time the king of their land was visiting their territory.

The tribal men, women and children, in their colourful attire, waited with bated breath, all the time wondering how their king

A ROYAL REQUEST





would look like. The rising clouds of dust in the horizon told them that the royal visitors were approaching their territory.

As they came near the plateau, the horse-riders, numbering a dozen, slowed their pace. When they came in full view, the sight that greeted the tribals took their breath away. The two riders leading the procession held flag-poles. The flags were the royal standard. Behind them rode two soldiers, wearing armour and holding spears with glistening heads. Following them were four riders in a single row, and they

could easily identify the king from the jewellery that adorned his chest, shoulders, and arms. To his left was a young woman. Though she had a small crown on her head, she wore a comparatively simple dress. On either side of them were bodyguards—one of them being Captain Veer Singh. Behind them rode four more soldiers, two in a row.

As they dismounted, Chief Khamba went forward to greet the king. Pratapavarma took hold of his hands and smiled at him before he hugged the chieftain in a warm embrace. "This is my daughter, Priyamvada," he introduced her simply. "He's Captain Veer Singh."

Khamba led them to the shade of the huge tree, where a hurriedly improvised chair made of wooden logs and a footrest, both covered with typical tribal cloth of red and green stripes, had been placed. There was some consternation on his face as he showed the king to the chair. There was no second chair for the princess! The king quickly realised the tribal chieftain's predicament and asked Priyamvada to sit on the stool by his side.



When Priyamvada heard of the king's decision to visit the northern parts, she had pleaded with him to allow her to accompany him. She had cherished a desire to see the Nungmai hill ranges and, if possible, take a look at the plant that brought forth the exotic flower, "Shatabdika". Pratapavarma thought for a while, and then acceded to her request.

"We're indeed grateful to you, Your Majesty, for taking the trouble of riding all this distance to meet these humble subjects of yours," said Chief Khamba by way of welcome. "We're extremely happy that the princess has accompanied you and graced this territory by her presence. Some of us who are seeing your majesty and the princess for the first time will never forget this occasion. Your Majesty, please tell us, how can we be of service to you?"

Before the Chieftain concluded his address to the royal visitors, a group of young women came forward holding bamboo poles. The poles were placed criss-cross on the ground. Later, some girls knelt on the ground to

manipulate the poles, moving them from one side to another, sometimes in slow motion, at other times quite fast as well, while a few other girls danced between the poles, cleverly avoiding being caught between the poles. They seemed to take the cue from the song some other women sang, to the accompaniment of drums. Priyamvada watched the dance with great interest.

By this time, the tribals had formed a circle around the king, princess, and their chieftain. King Pratapavarma realised it was time he told them the purpose of his visit. He rose in his seat and there was a loud cheering from all sides.

Pratapavarma recalled the tribal youths' participation in the Holi celebrations and his announcement that the Maninagar army would henceforth recruit the tribal people as well. He told them that the northern parts had given him no cause for worry, as the impregnable mountain ranges stood as a sentinel. He assured them that he had postponed a visit to them till now not because he was unconcerned





about their welfare. He said that all his subjects—including the tribals—were like his sons and daughters.

The king then repeated what their chieftain had said on their behalf, asking how they could be of help to the kingdom, and went on telling them of the calamity that had struck the southern parts. When they heard the king explain how a curse had fallen on the flower “Shatabdika” and how the flower was now attracting the monster to intrude upon their land, they all looked aghast.

“Though you all have been

living so close to the flower, you’ve fortunately escaped the presence of the monster and the destruction that he causes in his trail. There’s no question of engaging him in fight. We must cleverly distract him from our land and prevent him from returning to us. If the flowers are bringing him here, then the same flowers must be used for taking him somewhere else. It is for this hazardous task that we will need your help!” concluded Pratapa-varma.

There was silence all around: It was broken by Khamba. “However much dangerous it is going to be, Your Majesty, it will be our duty to save the kingdom from any calamity. It is now more *our* responsibility because, if he is not prevented, soon the monster may reach us in search of the flower! Our tribe is not wanting in courageous men, especially among the youth. It won’t be difficult to find someone who’ll be willing even to sacrifice his life for the sake of the kingdom, Your Majesty!”

No sooner the Chieftain had said that than there was a stir among the people. A young man



was seen pushing himself to the front. "You, Thangal!" the words escaped from Khamba's lips.

"Yes, I remember him!" said Pratapavarma. "He and his team won several prizes in the Holi sports and games."

Princess Priyamvada was seen leaning towards the king. "It was he who presented to me the bouquet of flowers!" she whispered into his ears.

It was not much of a whisper, and Thangal could hear every word. "Yes, princess, it was I who gave you those flowers—without realising that they would bring so much misery to our kingdom!" he said, after courtesying to her. "Your Majesty, if you'll permit me, I shall go after the monster!"

"We're so happy, young man!" the king remarked. "But first obtain the permission of your Chieftain!"

Khamba was double quick in his response. "When you offer your services to the kingdom, you need not wait for anyone's permission, Thangal. But have you any idea how you'll tackle the monster?"

"Your Majesty!" Thangal was

still facing the king. "I shall take all the flowers that are in bloom in a boat and chase the monster, then lead him to a place and leave the flowers with him so that he won't have to come back to Maninagar at all!" he said in one breath.

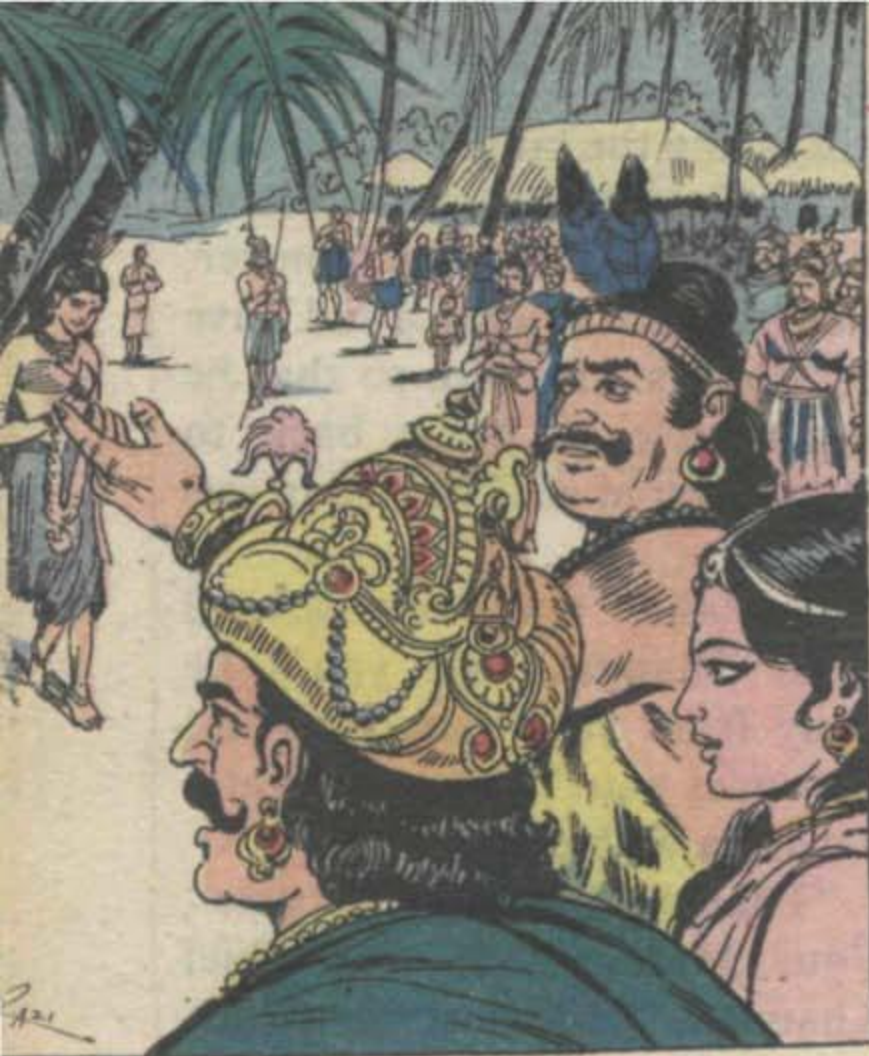
"All that may take several days, Thangal, and you'll be away from your family. Won't they miss you?" observed Pratapavarma with concern.

"Thangal has only a sister, Your Majesty." It was Chief Khamba. "They lost their parents when they were little children."

A 15-year-old girl was then seen slowly coming forward, with a small garland of wild flowers in her hands. She walked with hesitation. "She's my sister, Laisna," said Thangal.

Laisna went near Priyamvada and placed the garland on her with some trepidation. A cheer arose from the tribal women and men. The princess caught hold of her hands and caressed her cheeks. She turned to Thangal. "When you're gone away, let her remain with me in the palace. Will you come to the palace and





stay with me, Laisna?" Priyamvada directed the question to the girl. She was too shy to speak. She merely smiled.

"Khamba, my daughter came along to fulfil a desire," said Pratapavarma. "When she received the bunch of flowers from Thangal, she was keen that the palace garden grew the flowers. When we were told that there is a curse on the flower, we decided not to grow it in our garden. However, Priyamvada is eager to see the plants and the flowers in bloom—at least from a distance."

"That shouldn't be difficult, Your Majesty!" said Thangal excitedly. "I shall take her there myself."

"If they go on horseback, they can come back soon, Your Majesty," said the chieftain, reassuringly.

"Priyamvada, you may go with Thangal," assented Pratapavarma. "Let the bodyguard accompany you. Thangal, you may take one of the horses," the king added, recalling how cleverly the young man rode on his pony while taking part in "Mai-pu-la", the game introduced to commemorate the twenty-fifth year of his rule. "Till they come back, you may take me round your habitat," said the king, turning to the chieftain.

The three of them rode out, Priyamvada and Thangal in front and the bodyguard behind them. Suddenly, Thangal halted his horse and pointed out. "There! Can you see those bamboos and the flowers on top of them?"

For Priyamvada, it was a stunning sight. The bamboos grew among a cluster of rocky tops of the hills. As the sun fell on



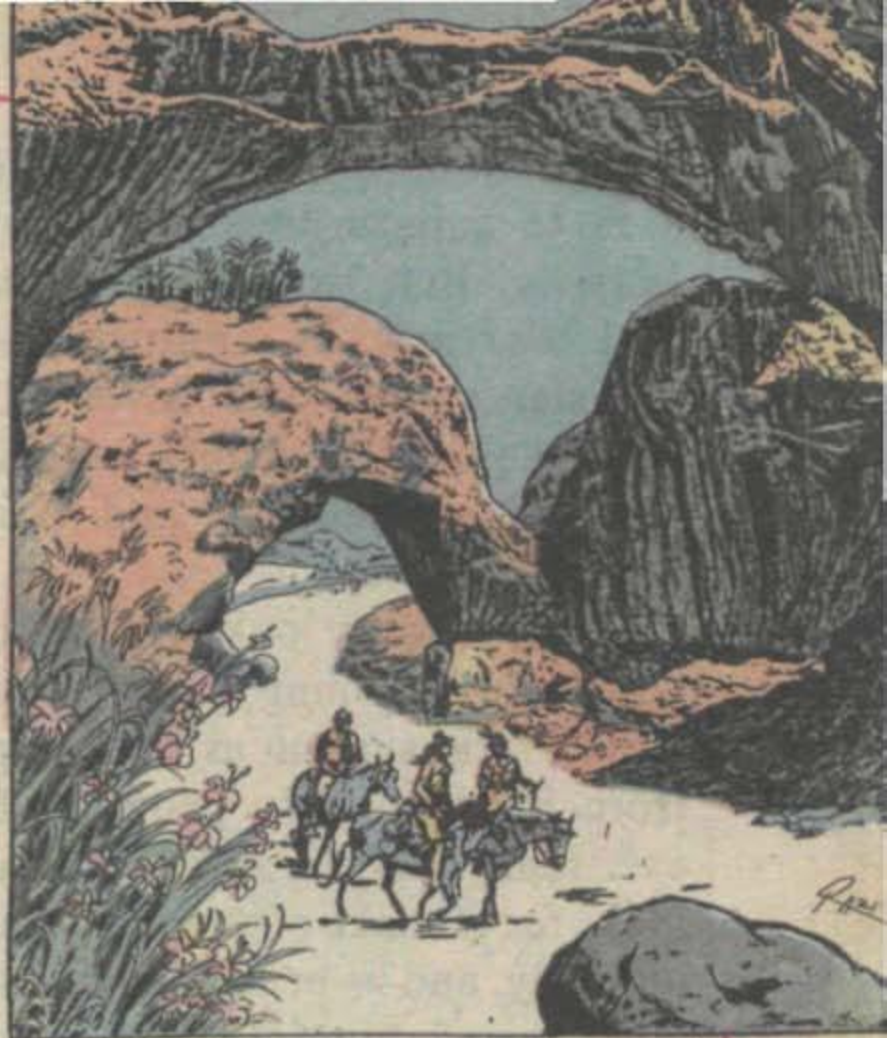
the bright red flowers, they made a glorious sight. "Oh! What a lovely sight!" exclaimed Priyamvada. "What a pity that a curse should fall on such beautiful flowers! Thangal, do you think we can go a little closer?"

"No princess!" said the youth. "The horses can't climb the rocks, and it'll take a long time if we were to climb up there on foot."

"You said you'll gather *all* the flowers in bloom for the monster? How will *you* go there? Won't it be risky?" observed the princess.

"Yes, it's risky, no doubt," replied Thangal with a snile. "I shall not come alone; my friends will help me cut the trees down to get at the flowers. Once they are with me, all tied up, I shall go in a boat out into the sea and entice the monster away from the kingdom!"

"I've no doubt, you'll succeed, Thangal!" the princess had lowered her voice, sounding anxious about his safety. "We all will be eagerly awaiting your return. Come, let's go back. I only wish some miracle happened to take away the curse on



the flower," said Priyamvada as she took a last glance at "Shatabdika" in full bloom but far, far away.

When they went back, they saw that the king and the chieftain were already back from their visit to the dwellings of the tribals. "It was such a lovely sight, father, I didn't want to come away for some time," said Priyamvada excitedly. "It'll be really hazardous to approach the trees and gather the flowers!" she voiced her concern.

While King Pratapavarma smiled at her, the chieftain



reassured him, "We tribals are used to a hazardous life, Your Majesty. But, by coming to us and warning us against the monster, you've really saved our lives. We can depend on Thangal. He's adventuresome, and I've full faith in him."

"I shall eagerly look forward to your return, young man!" said King Pratapavarma as he got up from his seat. "My people will ever remember the sacrifices you make for the sake of the kingdom, its safety, and its peace! Khamba, after seeing him off, you may bring his sister to the palace."

The king and the chieftain moved forward, hand in hand, to where the soldiers and the horses, were waiting. Priyamvada hugged Laisna before she got on to her horse. Then Pratapavarma

mounted his horse; Captain Veer Singh and the bodyguard took their position on either side of the king and the princess. The eight soldiers then mounted their horses. Chief Khamba, flanked by Thangal and Laisna, bade an affectionate farewell to the royal party as a loud cheer arose from the tribals, once again.

"Thangal, my son!" said the Chieftain, resting his right hand on the shoulders of the young man as they walked back to their abode. "We're proud of you—for offering to venture on this dangerous mission. May the Divine Mother guard you and bring you back to us in glory! Tonight, we shall have a community dinner to wish you success. Send word to everybody!"

—*To continue.*





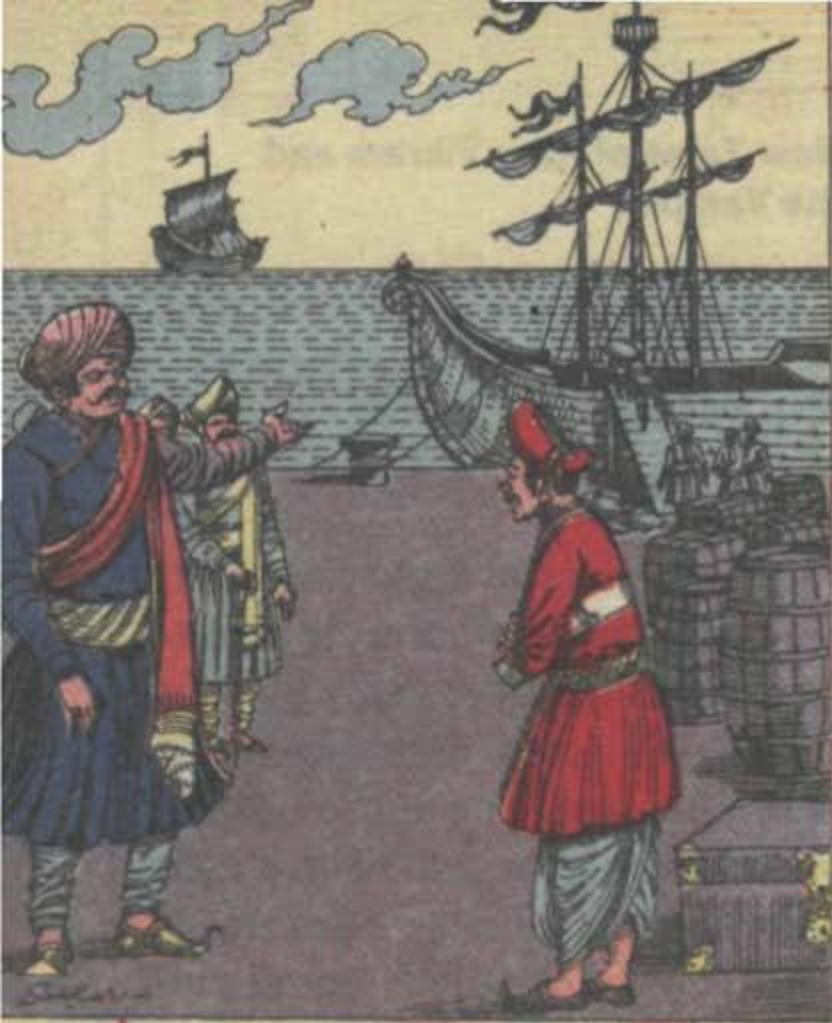
New Tales of King Vikram and
the Vampire

WHO ARE REAL FRIENDS?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. And I don't know why! Maybe you're acting under directions from someone. Mind you,





they may claim for themselves the success you achieve in your mission. And in case you were to fail, they would not mind putting all the blame on you! The story of Dhanapal is a good example of this warning. Listen to that story."

The vampire then narrated the story of Dhanapal the rich merchant. He did most of his business by sending merchandise by ships to the neighbouring countries. He earned a good profit from his business and became so wealthy that he could even possess a ship. In fact, other mer-

chants also made use of his ship to send their products. Dhanapal was generous-hearted and was always willing to help needy people.

Once he was taking his merchandise as well as the goods given by other merchants when the ship sank in the sea. Though he was saved, he lost all the goods that the ship carried. He had to compensate the fellow merchants, and most of his savings had to be spent on meeting their demands. What was left was the house in which he and his son stayed. Unfortunately, he had taken a loan on the house, and when the person from whom he had borrowed money heard about Dhanapal's misadventure, he now began pestering him to return the loan.

He called his son Gunapal and said, "We'll have to raise some money if we want to continue our business. You go to our village and meet our relation, Nandapal. Ask for twenty thousand rupees. I'm sure he'll lend that much money. He's quite wealthy. He is frequently away, so you may stay back till he returns."

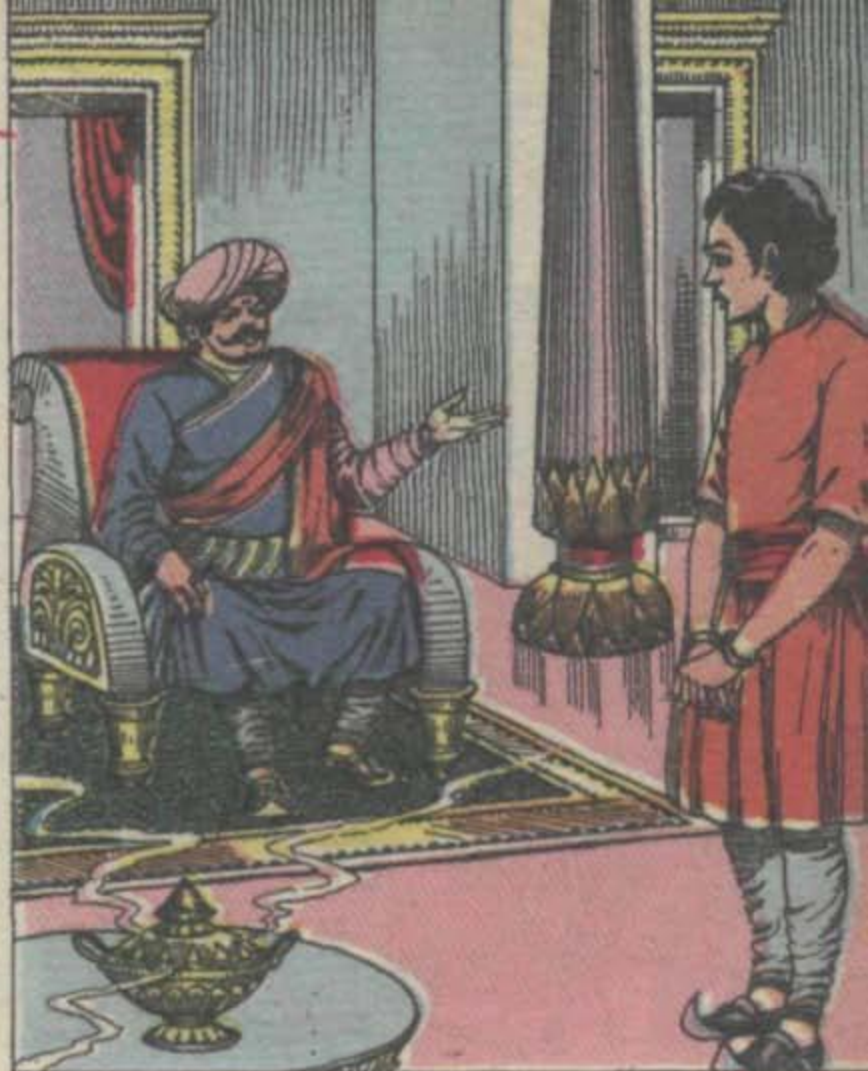
The next day, Gunapal got



ready to go to Kanakapur. "By evening, you'll reach Pandharpur. You may stay there with my friend Pannalal. But don't let him know why you're going to Kanakapur. Early morning tomorrow, you may start for Kanakapur. If Nandapal is away, you go to Govindapal and stay with him. He is a good friend. And after you get the money from Nandapal, you may come here straight." Dhanapal gave his son all instructions in detail.

Gunapal reached Pandharpur by evening and searched for Pannalal's house. He received the boy with affection. During their conversation, Gunapal happened to mention of the loss his father sustained when his ship sank with the merchandise. He also revealed how his father had asked him not to bother any of his friends.

"That was not fair of Dhanapal!" remarked Pannalal. "Why shouldn't he ask his friends to help him? Do you think that miserly Nandapal will help you? He may be related to you, but I've my own doubt. If I don't help my friend, then what's the value of friendship?"



"My father had actually cautioned me against telling you of his misfortune," said Gunapal. "He doesn't wish to bother you."

"Gunapal, I know your father very well," said Pannalal. "He had always obliged whoever had gone to him for help. In fact, I had an occasion to borrow some money from him. I haven't yet repaid him. When you go tomorrow, take that money from me and give it to him."

Gunapal told him that he would take the money on his way back from Kanakapur. When he reached that place, he found that



Nandalal was away just as his father had apprehended. So, he went in search of Govindapal, who too received him with affection. When he was told what had brought the boy to Kanakapur, he told Gunapal, "Don't you know that Nandapal had become rich by cheating your father? I'm really surprised that Dhanapal wanted you to ask *him* for help. Don't keep any hope, and I would advise you not to wait for him. I shall arrange for whatever money your father needs."

"It's only now that I know of my father's character, sir!" said

Gunapal. "He has such sincere friends like you. Yet, he asked me to approach only Nandapal and not to mention even a word to any of his friends." He then told Govindapal what had happened at Pandharpur. "I'm really surprised at my father's behaviour."

"Your father is like that," said Govindapal. "He has always been helpful. Whoever had gone from here to seek help from him had never returned empty-handed. And Dhanapal would never ask for the return of the loans. There are several people in Kanakapur, including me, who owe him money. I shall myself go round and collect all the money and give it to you. Dhanapal should carry on his business."

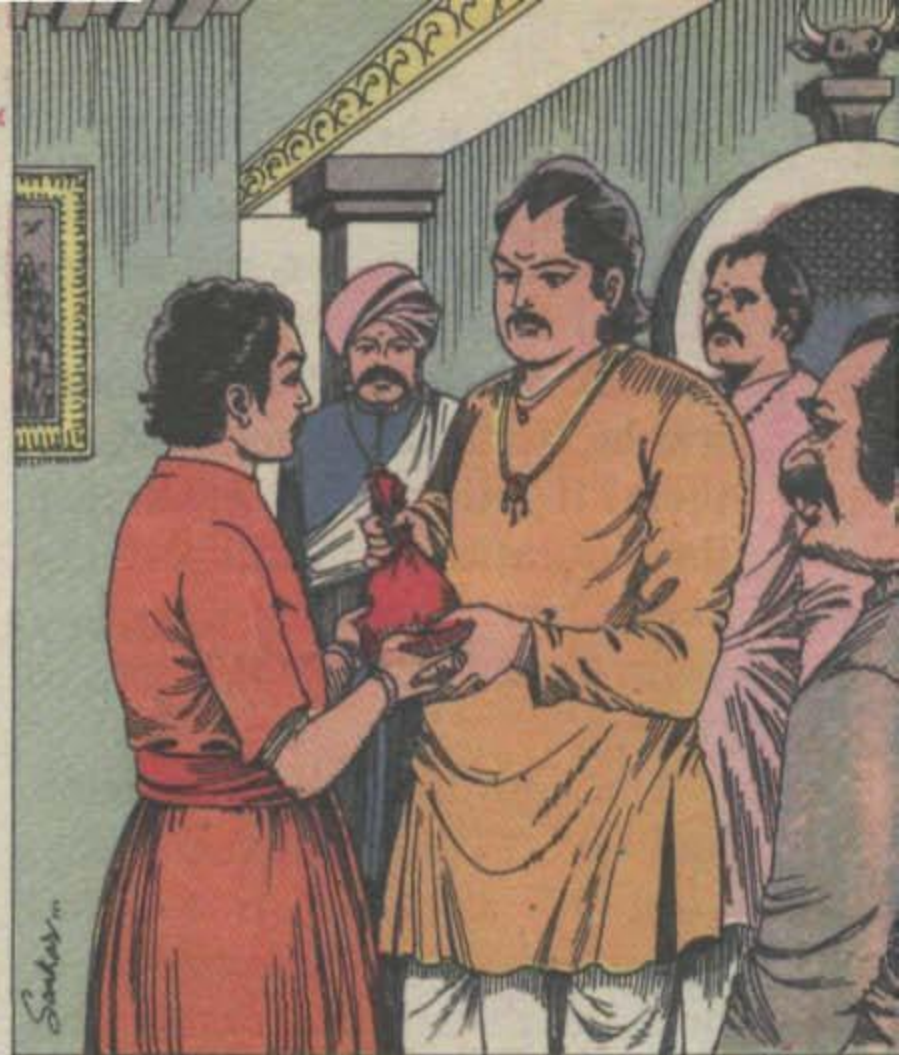
Govindapal went round meeting the debtors of Dhanapal. They were sorry to hear of the misfortune that had overtaken Dhanapal, and all of them promptly paid up whatever they owed him. Govindapal handed over thirty thousand rupees to Gunapal. "Add to this what Pannalal has promised to give you and ask your father to repay



whatever he had borrowed pledging his house. We all want him to carry on his business. If he is still short of money, tell him that he should not hesitate to ask us—his friends.”

Gunapal took the money Govindalal gave him and went back to Pandharpur to fetch the money promised by Pannalal. Without wasting any time, he went back home, to find that an old man was talking to his father. “This is Nandapal whom you went to meet in Kanakapur,” Dhanapal introduced his relation to his son. “He was going to Lakhimpur for some work. On the way, he took ill and came here to rest. I took him to a doctor and he is now better. We must arrange to send him back home. Before that, you take his blessings.”

Gunapal prostrated before Nandapal and took his blessings. After they had seen him off to Kanakapur, Gunapal handed the money he had collected from Kanakapur and Pandharpur to his father. “You have such good friends everywhere; yet you sent me to Nandapal knowing well that he is a miser and will not care



to help!”

Dhanapal merely smiled at him. “My son, I wanted to give you a test. I wanted you to acquire worldly knowledge and some business tricks. Now I find that you’ve learnt many things and have really succeeded in the test I gave you.”

The vampire concluded the story there and turned to King Vikramaditya. “O King! Why did Dhanapal send his son to fetch money from his miserly relative instead of his sincere friends? Is it true that he wanted Gunapal to learn worldly ways?



He had no hesitation in taking the money sent by his friends. After asking his son not to tell any of his friends about the setback he suffered in business, was he fair in taking money from them? If you know the answers to these questions and still prefer to keep silent, I need not warn you, your head will be blown to pieces!”

The king thought for a while and said, “Dhanapal had undergone all sorts of trials and tribulations in his life and he had become wiser. His friends realised that he had no wish to trouble them though he knew that they all owed him money and could easily repay him; that’s why he preferred to try his luck with the miserly Nandapal. They also knew how good he was by

not reminding them about the money they owed him. That’s why they decided to repay him without waiting for him to ask for repayment and to help him avoid asking miserly Nandapal for help. That’s how they collected the money and handed it over to Gunapal. Dhanapal’s real intention was to let his son know what kind of friends he cultivated. He also wanted Gunapal to learn how to make money in business without displeasing anyone. So, what Dhanapal did was only correct.”

The vampire realised that the king had outsmarted him again, and flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.

ARTISTS OF MODERN INDIA

India achieved excellence in art in a remote past. Even today, lovers of art all over the world marvel at Ajanta, Ellora, Sanchi, Konarak, Madurai, and numerous other monuments of antiquity for their artistic splendour. But forms of art change with the passage of time. You have already read summaries of modern Indian literature. Beginning with this issue, you will read about those who have built the tradition of modern art in India (Turn to page 34).



BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

Man's "blood" relation

Very often we watch the TV carrying appeals for blood donation to help patients awaiting surgery, when they may need blood transfusion. When the details appear on the screen, they invariably mention the kind of blood that is required—like Rh negative or Rh positive. Rh is an abbreviation of Rhesus, which is a type of monkey.

The two main types of monkeys are *langurs* and *macaques*. The Rhesus Macaque is world famous, because its blood is very much similar to human blood and, till recently, these monkeys were being used on a wide scale for medical experiments; the animals were thus a much valued export item. Consequently, their number was fast dwindling, and they became an endangered species. The Government of India went to their rescue and banned their export, putting a stop to the cruelty meted out to them.

The rhesus monkeys are commonly found in north and central India which experience a cold climate for almost six months in a year. This accounts for their thick furry coat. When they stand on their haunches, they are nearly 60cm tall.

'Troops' of these monkeys can be seen freely roaming villages and towns, mostly near temples and tanks, and railway station platforms.





RAJA RAVI VARMA

What is known as Kerala today had been a land comprising two kingdoms till 1947. They were Travancore and Cochin.

Raja Ravi Varma, one of the makers of modern Indian art, was related to the royal family of Travancore. He was born in 1848, in a village about 40 kilometres from Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala, which was also the capital of Travancore.

When he was a mere toddler, he would draw, at the first opportunity, figures of animals, birds, and trees on the walls of his house. No reprimand would check him.



One day his uncle, Raja Raja Varma, who lived in the town, saw these drawings. Raja Raja Varma was an artist himself and he recognised the talent hidden in his nephew: Instead of asking the boy to stop drawing, as all others did, Raja Raja Varma began encouraging him to take to art.

Soon Ravi Varma came down to Trivandrum. Oil painting was then a new technique. He learnt it from a palace artist, named Alagiri Naidu.

While Ravi Varma knew well the stories from India's epics, like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, he was also a great painter of the human form.

bharata, he came under the influence of a gifted Dutch painter, Theodore Jenson, who was then in the town, by watching him at work. There was no opportunity for Ravi Varma to learn from Jenson. But before long, he developed his own style, which bore European characteristics.

Thus, Ravi Varma combined classical Indian themes with some European techniques. By doing this, he broke new grounds.

In 1882, one of his paintings received a gold medal at an exhibition in Madras organised by the then Governor of Madras Province. The painting was later exhibited in Vienna. His fame soon spread. He was a celebrated figure by the time his end came at the age of fifty-eight.

"I have spent entire mornings scrutinizing Ravi Varma's paintings. I like them very much, indeed. These paintings show how much our country's typical human figures, themes, and expressions are dear to us," remarked Rabindranath Tagore once.



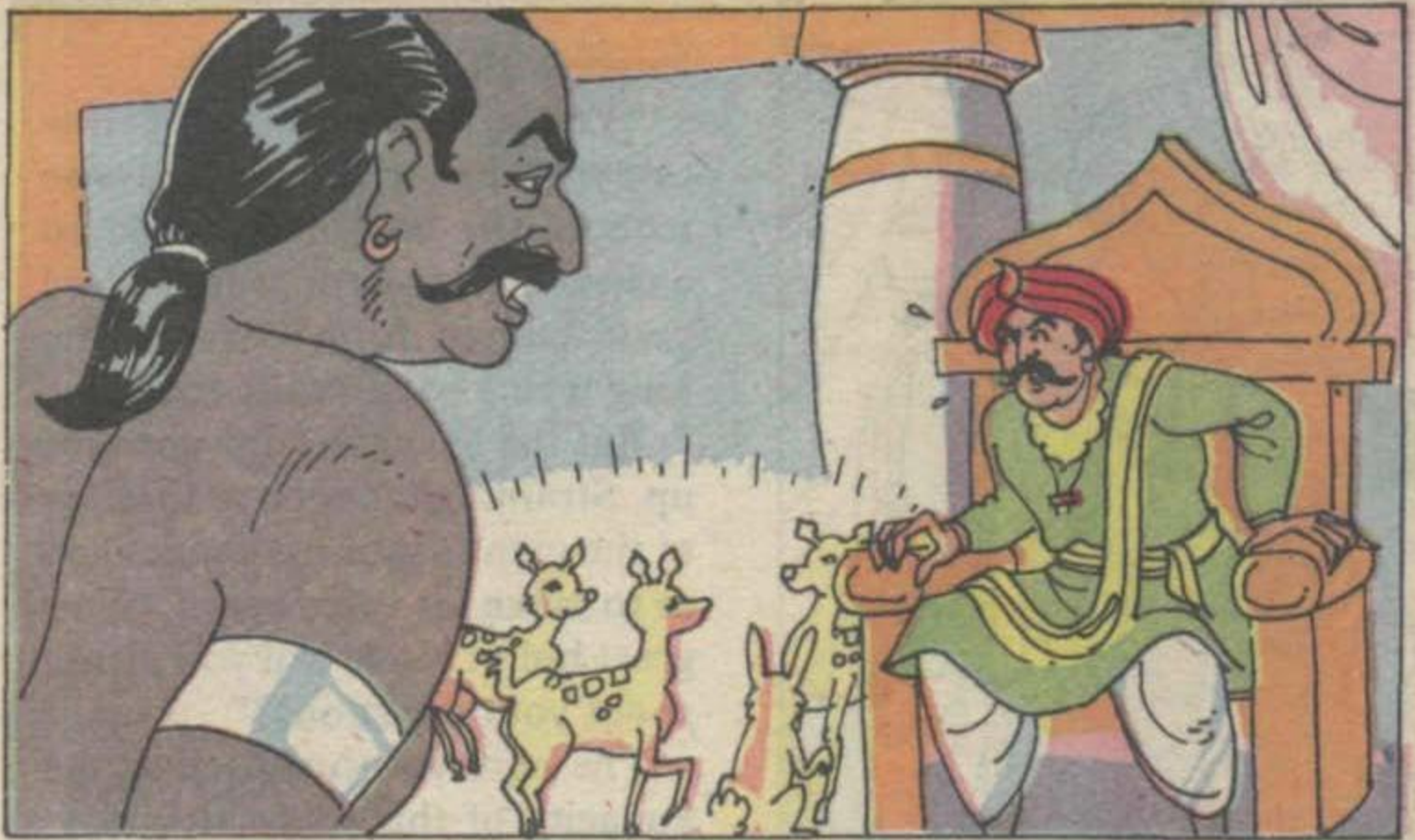
DO YOU KNOW?

1. King Dasaratha had a daughter. What was her name? Whom did she marry?
2. Who invented the game of Table Tennis? When?
3. What is the connection between Bhopal and Bhoj Pal?
4. How much of the earth is covered by water?
5. A famous Tamil work is popularly called the 'Fifth Veda'. Name the book and its author.
6. Like Rome, a city in South India, too, is built on seven hills. Name the city.
7. Diamond does not dissolve in any acid; what else can destroy diamond?
8. A State in India has been named after a tribe. Which State? What does the name mean?
9. Who were the nine 'gems' (geniuses) in the Court of King Vikramaditya?
10. Who was the European, who became a high official in the court of a Chinese emperor? Name the emperor.
11. Can you identify 'Karunadu' (meaning land on a lofty area)?
12. Who made the first model of an aircraft?
13. What is the main difference between Nayanmars and Alvars?
14. What is the name of the fort built by the English in Calcutta? When was it built?
15. When an ice cube *melts* in a glass of water, will it raise the level of water in the glass?

ANSWERS

1. Princess Shanta. She married sage Rishyashringa, who was capable of invoking rain.
2. James Gibb of England—in 1888.
3. The capital of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal, derives its name from the lake, Bhoj Pal.
4. Approximately 70 per cent.
5. *Thirukkural*—Thiruvalluvar.
6. Trivandrum or Thiru-Ananta-puram—the city of the sacred serpent, Ananta.
7. Intense heat.
8. Mi (man) zo (hill): man of the hill.
9. Kalidasa, Vetalaabhatta, Ghatakarpata, Varahamihira, Kshapanaka, Amara-simha, Vararuchi, Shanku, Dhanvantari.
10. Marco Polo of Italy—Emperor Kublai Khan.
11. Karnataka.
12. Surprisingly, the well-known artist Leonardo da Vinci.
13. The ancient Tamil saints, Nayanmars, were Saivites or worshippers of Siva; Alvars were Vaishnavites or worshippers of Vishnu.
14. Fort William—between 1696 and 1715.
15. No. The cube would have already raised the water level!





TALES FROM MANY LANDS (India)

A DIALOGUE IN SILENCE

Long, long ago, there lived a giant who travelled from land to land declaring,

*"Whoever answers my questions two,
Shall be rewarded with the magic pearl;
But if he fails to do so,
He shall turn to a golden doe!"*

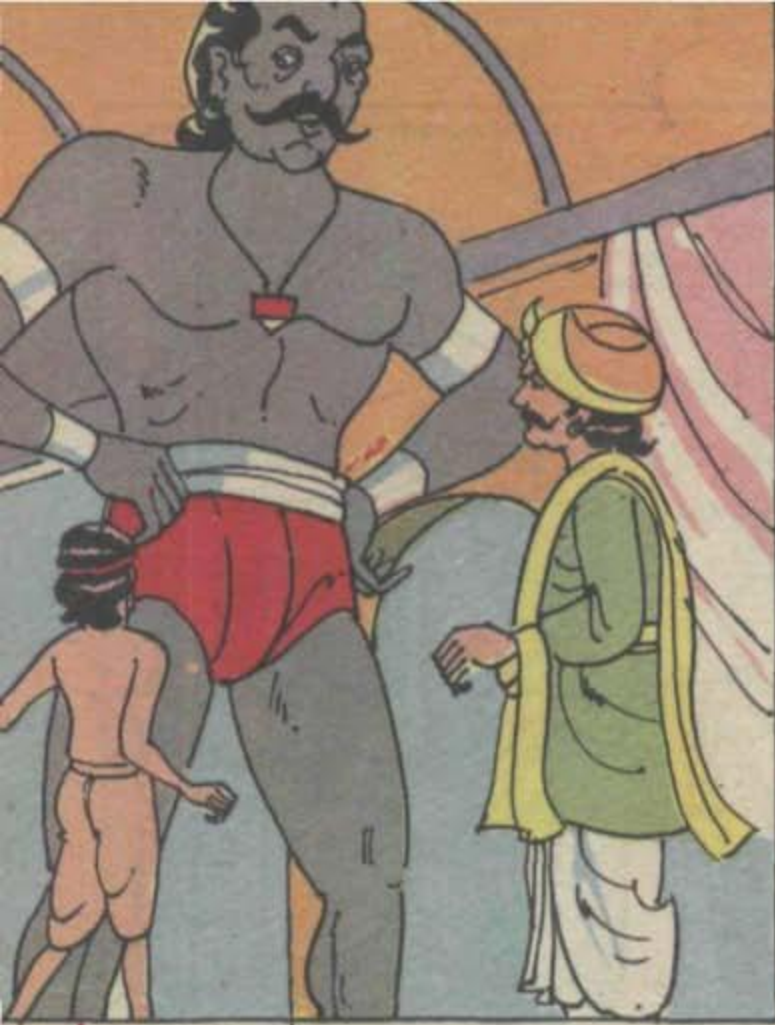
Many made an attempt to give a satisfactory answer to the giant's questions. For, the reward he offered was indeed

very attractive. It was an extraordinary pearl that shone like a dozen stars.

One day, the giant came to a small country on top of a hill. He sang his refrain loud and clear. The king summoned all his counsellors and wise men. But none could answer the questions and they were forthwith changed into wee little animals. The king was indeed a sad man for having lost his circle of wise advisors.

CHANDAMAMA





"Who's going to counsel me now?" he lamented.

It was evening and a poor shepherd boy was returning home from the pasture when he heard the giant's loud refrain,

*"Whoever answers my questions two,
Shall be rewarded with the magic pearl;
But if he fails to do so,
He shall turn to a golden doe!"*

"I'll answer your questions," he said with a confident air, and begged admittance to the royal court.

The giant surveyed his chal-

lenger with much interest.

"You're just a young lad! How can you answer what all the wise men of the land have failed to answer? Do you too want to lose your human form?" asked the king trying to dissuade the boy.

But the shepherd did not give up. Straining his neck to look up at the giant's face, he shouted so as to make his voice heard, "You great bully! Now, will you please shoot your questions?"

The ogre was surprised at the audacity of this puny little boy. Never had he met such a brave adversary. He was to put his questions by way of signs, and the answers also were to be given in the same manner.

The giant showed one finger to the shepherd by way of his question and the boy promptly answered by showing him two. Thereupon the giant showed both his hands towards him and then threw them upwards towards the sky. But his opponent stretched his hands towards the earth and took a short jump.

While all waited in pin drop silence, expecting the boy to turn into a doe any moment, nothing happened. The shepherd con-



tinued to stand erect in his human form. He bowed graciously to everyone and took his leave to join the awaiting sheep, who had begun bleating impatiently for their master.

The giant went up to the king and said, "O king, this simple shepherd boy has given the right answers to my questions. I'm satisfied."

"But would you explain the meaning of your silent dialogue?" asked the king.

"The questions were very hard as they were put by signs. But the boy is indeed clever; he succeeded where all others failed," replied the giant. "By showing one finger, I asked whether there is only one principle in Nature. He answered by showing two fingers, which meant that there are two and not one, Matter and Spirit."

"That was indeed brilliant!" exclaimed the king.

"I then asked him," continued the big creature, "how was it that he did not fall off from the round earth? His signs indicated that it was the attraction towards the centre of the earth that held him to it. He even illustrated this



phenomenon by a jump."

"He is no doubt a genius! A great man of wisdom!" murmured all those who were present.

"Now, Your Majesty, I must take leave of you. But before I do so, here is this magic pearl to be given to the shepherd boy as the promised reward. You have just to touch with this pearl the golden does and they will once again assume their human forms," said the giant, and he disappeared in a trice.

The next morning, the king summoned the shepherd and



addressed him thus: "Dear lad, we're indeed proud that in our kingdom there is such a clever boy as you, with the wit and wisdom to answer the questions that have baffled the best minds of our realm. But tell us, how could you read the questions? How could you master the knowledge of science and philosophy to answer them?"

"O King," replied the boy with a gentle bow, "it was very simple. With one finger the giant meant to say that he'll pierce one of my eyes. With two fingers I conveyed to him that if he pierced one of my eyes, I would pierce both his eyes."

"Oh, I see," said the king with a short sigh.

"Then he showed by his hands that he would lift me and throw me into the air. I, by my gestures,

told him that I would come down quite safe onto the ground and bolt away!"

"Bravo! Bravo!" exclaimed all present in the royal court.

The king came down from his throne and affectionately patting the shepherd boy on his back said, "This is the prize that the giant has left for you. Would you now touch with this magic pearl those golden does roaming in the palace courtyard?"

The boy did so. Lo and behold! The wise men once again assumed their human forms.

The shepherd was offered lots of wealth and a place in the king's *darbar*. But he preferred to live with his flock of sheep, in his wee little hut beside the river.

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das





VEER HANUMAN

(35)

(The wailings of the Rakshasa women, who have lost their menfolk in the battle, rouse Ravana from his meditation. He decides he must now go and fight Rama and Lakshmana to avenge the death of so many brave warriors of Lanka, including his own sons and brothers. The battle of all battles now start. An arrow from Ravana hits Lakshmana and he falls unconscious. Hanuman once again brings the mountain that grows medicinal plants. Lakshmana is revived. Lord Indra sends his charioteer, Matali, with his own chariot and arms for the use of Rama.)

Both Rama and Ravana proved to be powerful warriors, and the battle raged for a long time. Ravana was unable to control his anger when he saw Rama, seated in the chariot sent by Lord Indra, fighting tirelessly. He sent the *Gandharva* arrow, which was cleverly deflected by Rama. He then chose *Divya*,

which disintegrated when it met an arrow sent by Rama. Ravana was really baffled. Whatever powerful arrows he was sending were all being met by equally powerful arrows from Rama. Ravana now decided that he would send demoniac arrows which Rama might find it difficult to meet.

RAVANA'S END





An *Asura* arrow from Ravana sent hundreds of poisonous snakes hurtling towards Rama, who destroyed them with the *Garuda*. The birds which came out of the arrow ate up all the snakes. Ravana sent a shower of arrows in a whole lot which did not fall anywhere near Rama, because his one arrow had scattered them far, far away. Ravana, too, appeared tireless and the sight bothered Vibhishana and the Vanara soldiers, who were till then speechless as they watched their hero, Rama, matching his prowess with the mighty Ravana.

Ravana thought this was the time when he should take them unawares. He aimed a powerful trident at Rama. It sped towards him spitting fire. "Don't think you would survive this spear, Rama!" he shouted. "This will avenge the death of my dearest sons and brothers. You should at least now realise what your fate will be if you were to fight with me. And where's your brother, Lakshmana? He'll be my next target!"

Rama chose one of the arrows sent for him by Lord Indra. It broke Ravana's trident into a thousand pieces. Ravana watched it with wonderment. From where did Rama acquire all these powerful arrows? The next moment, his charioteer saw that Rama's arrows were hitting the chariot from all directions. Fearing that one of them might fall on Ravana, he began backing the chariot. The Rakshasa soldiers wondered whether they were facing defeat, and retreated to save their lives.

Ravana was angry with his charioteer. "What's this?" he shouted at him. "Why are you reversing without my permis-



sion? Won't that give the impression that we're retreating? Do you think I'm afraid of Rama? This lord of Lanka will never suffer defeat! What you've done is an insult to me. I won't go back before I kill Rama. Come on! Take the chariot back to the front!"

"My lord! Please bear with me!" the charioteer pleaded. "What I did was in your own interests. You would have been hit by Rama's arrows which were encircling us. You were also tiring yourself. I thought you would need some respite, and the horses, too, need a rest. That's why I reversed the chariot. A charioteer should know where and when the chariot should be moved. On his capability depends the warrior's success or defeat. If he doesn't know this, he doesn't qualify to be a charioteer. I only did *my* duty. If you don't approve of that, you may tell me. I shall obey your commands."

Ravana was no more angry with him. "Yes, what you did was correct. There's no point in getting angry with you. Be that as it may, I want to see the end of Rama today itself. So, take me to



the front again!"

Meanwhile, Rama had taken advantage of the suspension of fight by Ravana and was resting. Sage Agastya, who was watching the fight from the heavens along with the *Devas*, descended to the earth and approached Rama. "I shall teach you the Aditya *mantra* to help you regain your enthusiasm and give you added vigour. You may chant the *mantra* and go back to fight."

Rama listened to Agastya and repeated the *mantra* three times. He now felt rejuvenated and got ready to resume the fight with





Ravana. "I've a feeling that today, I'll kill Ravana," Rama told his charioteer, Matali. "So, be watchful for every one of his moves. Of course, the charioteer of Lord Indra would know all these and I need not tell you anything particularly."

Matali guided the chariot cleverly much to the surprise of Ravana, who now aimed his arrows at Rama's chariot. But Rama met all of them in mid-air. It looked as though the battle was nearing its end. The speed of the arrows from both sides doubled, and it was certain that one of the

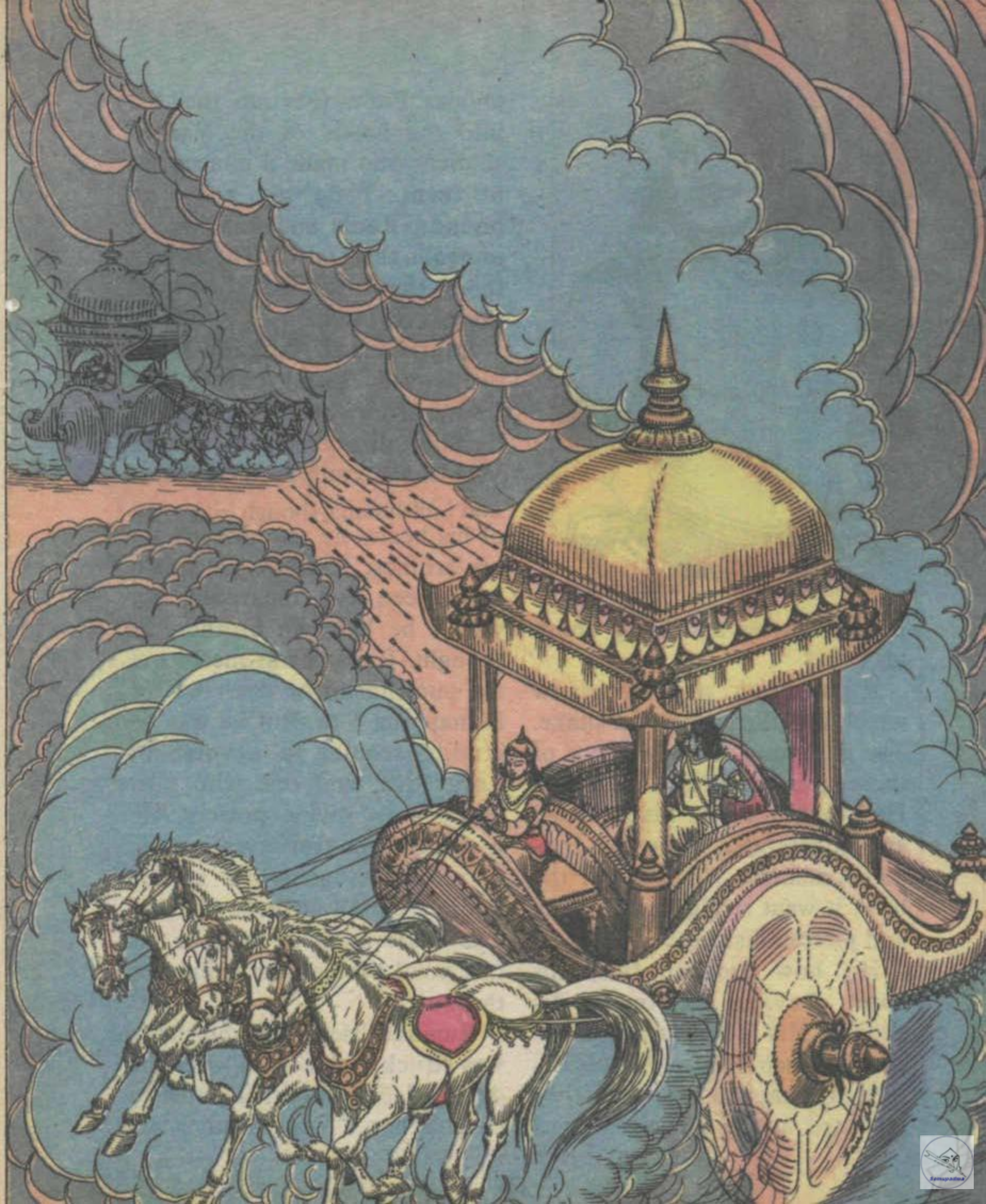
adversaries would meet with his end that day. The *Devas* watching the fighting stood still; they did not want to miss a single action of either Rama or Ravana. The soldiers on either side stopped fighting, so that they too could watch the great battle.

Before anybody realised what was happening, one of Rama's arrows beheaded Ravana. Lo and behold! Another head appeared on Ravana! Rama cut off that head, too. But the result was the same. Ravana got another head. Every time he got a new head, Ravana shouted aloud in glee. This happened a hundred and one times.

Rama was stupefied, wondering how his arrows were not effective on Ravana. But Matali knew that the time for Ravana's end had not yet come. There were some more moments left for him to meet with his end. He did not disclose this to Rama immediately. Let the fight between the two continue, he thought.

When the great moment approached, Matali alerted Rama. "The time has come to kill Ravana! Don't waste the opportunity; you may send the







Brahma arrow and bring about his end!”

Rama took out an arrow which had the shape of a snake. The glistening arrow was one of those given to him by Lord Indra. He brought it near his forehead and consecrated it by the *Brahma mantra*. When it left the bow, it went straight at Ravana and pierced his chest.

His bow dropped from his hand. Ravana fell inside his chariot. His life went out of his body. When Ravana’s soldiers realised what had happened, they retreated and ran back to their

abodes. But as they ran, they fell into the hands of the Vanara soldiers who made a mincemeat of them. Their joy knew no bounds. Rama and Lakshmana joined in their mirth. The *Devas*, from the heavens, showered flowers on them.

Sugriva and Angada were over-joyed. Loud cheers and shouts from them reverberated through all nooks and corners. Vibhishana congratulated Rama and Lakshmana, though in the heart of his hearts he also grieved for his brother, Ravana. He might have been evil incarnate, yet wasn’t he his own brother, he thought. Ravana was meted out the punishment he deserved for kidnapping Sita. But he was an erudite scholar, a devotee of Lord Siva, and one who possessed even divine powers. He had done *tapas* for several years, to please the gods and receive boons from all of them. Still, he was fickle-minded, and see his fate now! Vibhishana ruminated thus.

Rama realised that Vibhishana was struck with sorrow over the death of his brother. He tried to console him. “Your brother has



not met with any ordinary death, my good friend. Mind you, he died on the battlefield. He died a martyr for a cause. He had the courage to face me, knowing fully well that I'm invincible. He was not afraid of death. Anyone going to the battlefield is sure of either win or death. To die on the battlefield is itself considered a great honour. Ravana was glorious in his death. You can be certain of his place in the heavens. So, you don't worry on that count."

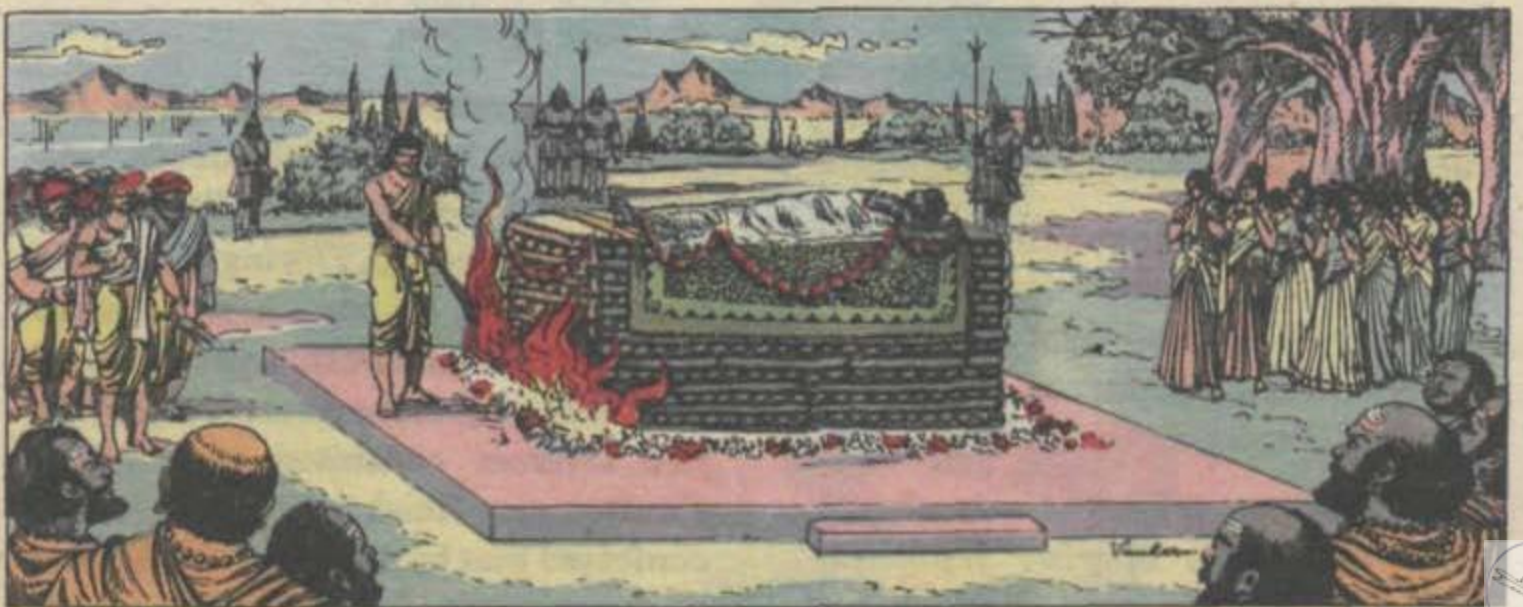
Vibhishana felt comforted. With Rama's permission, he began preparations for cremating his brother with due honours. When they heard of Ravana's death, Queen Mandodari and the other wives of Ravana converged on the battlefield, weeping aloud.

"My lord! You had won over all the *Devas* in the three worlds! Should *you* be defeated by a mere mortal?" cried Mandodari, heart-broken.

"You send them back to the palace, Vibhishana," Rama reminded him. "Afterwards you may proceed with the ceremonies." Vibhishana suddenly had a doubt whether it would be proper for him to perform the rites. Rama cleared that doubt for him. "None of his sons is alive. So there's nothing wrong in your performing his last rites."

When the sandalwood pyre was ready, Vibhishana himself lit it watched by Rama, Lakshmana, and the Vanara leaders.

—To continue



SPORTS SNIPPETS

Wimbledon Sidelights:



- This year's Wimbledon Championships were the 107th for men's events and 100th for women's events. The first women's singles was played in 1884; the event was interrupted during the two World Wars (1914-18, 1939-45).
- On July 3, Germany's Steffi Graf beat Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic to win the singles title for the fifth time. Incidentally, both are 24 years old and 1.75m tall. While Novotna is ranked ninth in the world, Graf had held Number 1 position for a record 186 weeks till March 1991. She was seeded No. 1 again after she won the French Open early this June.
- All women players who competed for the singles title this year received a gold bracelet with a pendant featuring the logo of the 100th Championship. Nineteen living champions had also their name inscribed on the pendant.
- This year's men's singles final on July 4 saw two U.S. players—Pete Sampras and Jim Courier—fight it out on America's Independence Day. The previous American final was in 1984.
- For Sampras, it was a win despite pain—the pain coming from the inflamed shoulder tendon which had



- bothered him for some days. The story is that he found it difficult even to brush his teeth! If that be the case, how would he enter Wimbledon at all? That was the million-dollar question. However, his doctor said, "Wait." Not only the doctor, but everybody else waited and saw Pete win.
- If the line referee had not given Jim Courier "the benefit of the doubt" the player would have been disqualified from Wimbledon. During the third round match, he used foul language and the chair umpire thought he would not "take any more abuse". After the two referees consulted each other, Courier was fined 1,500 dollars. He confessed that he did swear "in the heat of the moment. I wish I could take i

back." The referees were not sure what words he had actually used!

- It was there on the TV for everybody to see! Pete Sampras swore at the spectators during his fourth round match. Reason: He saw them cheering his opponent, Andrew Foster! But no action was taken, as umpires said there was no formal complaint! Sam-



pras later claimed that he had only said, "God bless you!" before whacking a ball into the crowd.

- Fines were imposed on seven other players for varying reasons (now hold your breath!) like: for not attending a postmatch interview; for throwing the racket to the ground and cracking it; for yelling at the umpire; for hitting the ball out of the court, and, of course, swearing.
- There was a mild scare among the umpires when they saw the list of players. Some of them have tongue-twisting names! Like Sarawuth Yongchantasakul and Atia Chotiyarnwong—both of Thailand. They are reported to have heaved a sigh of relief when the boys were eliminated in the early rounds!

- They call her 'Booming' Brenda. She produced the fastest serve among women—185 km per hour! Steffi Graf and Martina Navratilova clocked only 161 kmph—but theirs was the swiftest serve on the centre court. Among men, the fastest came from Stefan Edberg—180 kmph. The fastest ever recorded in Wimbledon was 201 kmph by Marc Goellner of Germany.

- Wimbledon rules do not permit players wearing anything gaudier than white! When Pablo Alano of Argentina and Sandor Noszaly of Hungary came to play, they were asked to change their "too colourful" outfit. The Tennis Federation officials ran hither and thither to produce white shirts (30 dollars apiece!). The women's sixth seed, Conchita Martinez of Spain, did not fare better; she, too, was asked to change into white. She came in a white skirt, the next day, too—"the same skirt," she said, "but I washed it!"

- The latest "golden child" of women's tennis is 12-year-old Martina Hingis. Like her namesake, Martina Navratilova, she too is a Czech-born. When Navratilova was coming out of the centre court after being beaten by Jana Novotna in the semi-finals, Hingis in an adjacent court was on her way to victory over Junior World No. 1, Nano Louarsabishvily of Georgia to reach the semi-finals. Hingis is the youngest ever winner of a Grand Slam Junior title at the French Open in June. The senior Martina is not happy because she feels "greatness is being thrust upon the little one at such a tender age".





How Water Gets Contaminated

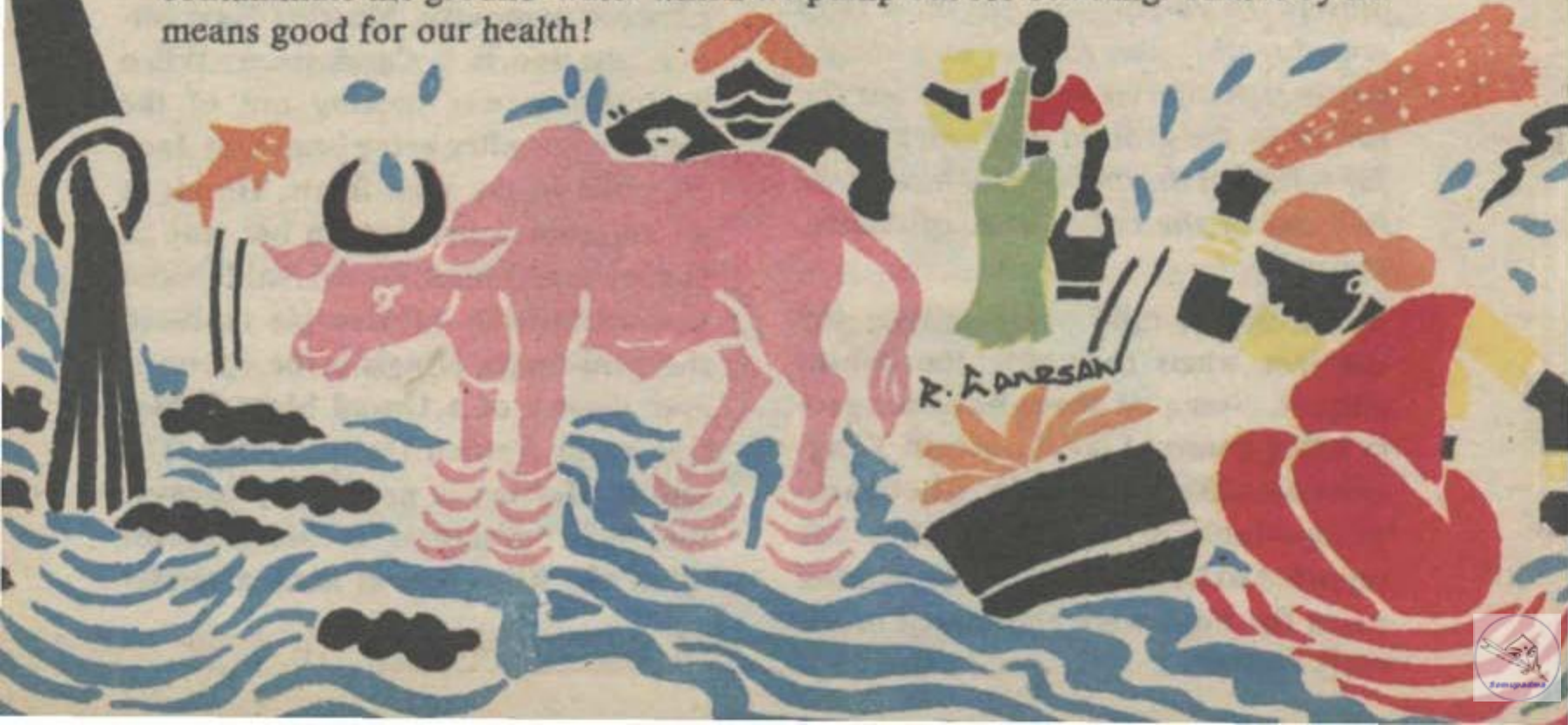
We have already given you a broad outline of the danger of pollution. Now, pollution is not limited to air alone; it spreads to water, too.

When we look at the sea, we never feel that water would be something scarce. Alas, the water we drink and with which we meet several other needs of ours is very limited indeed!

Nearly 97 per cent of the earth's water belongs to the oceans. Out of the remaining three per cent, two per cent lie frozen, mostly at the two ends of the earth. Only the remaining one per cent, contained in rivers, lakes, ponds, and streams or lying underground, is available to us.

You know how rivers are polluted by factories releasing their chemical waste into them and by men throwing corpses and all kinds of filth into them. Chemical fertilizers used in agriculture are swept into the rivers and lakes. These chemicals get into the fish, and when men and birds eat these fish, they are affected by the chemicals.

These chemicals as well as wastes from factories infiltrate the earth and contaminate the ground-water which we pump out for drinking. That is by no means good for our health!





Voice Of The Lord

Panchu Sastri of Bhagyanagar was a famous vocalist and used to receive a lot of invitations to hold recitals. Soon he got fed up with these programmes. After all, except for the clapping at the end of a recital, he had absolutely no contact or occasion to converse with his fans. One day he thought, instead of *singing* the glory of gods and goddesses, why should he not *speak* about them to audiences and narrate stories about them? That would evoke some response from the people and he would be more popular.

On one side of his house there was a well. It was very difficult to see its bottom, so deep it was. A turtle had made the well its home. During the month of Chitrai, Sastri used to put up a huge *pandal* to accommodate the large number of people who came to

listen to his discourses. Before entering the *pandal*, they would draw water from the well to wash their feet and face, and then go and take their seat and listen to him with extreme devotion. Every now and then Sastri would remind them, "You shouldn't be like the frogs and turtles in wells. You should listen to learned men and lead your life along the correct path."

The turtle in his well frequently heard this remark and felt insulted. 'Am I not supposed to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu? How can I be clubbed with frogs? It's time I got out of the well and exhibited my real power!'

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One day, one of the devotees forgot to draw back the bucket from the well. The turtle did not want to miss the opportunity, so



would be deprived of the offerings. He wanted to prevent such an eventuality and discussed the problem with his wife.

Sastri thought of a way out, and he shared it with his wife. The next day, the discourse had hardly concluded when the devotees heard Sastri's wife saying aloud, "My affectionate devotees! Don't ever think of shifting me from here. My desire is to remain here, in this very *puja* room." She spoke like a possessed woman. The devotees took that to be the voice of the Lord itself and abandoned the idea of a separate temple for the turtle.

The turtle was dismayed. "Is it my fate to be confined to this small, dinghy room? I was far better out in that well!" The turtle witnessed Panchu Sastri

becoming richer and richer and amassing wealth at its expense.

Soon the villagers also saw through his game. They clamoured that the turtle belonged, not to a single individual, but to the people, and whatever it received as offering should go back to the people for their welfare. That night, Panchu Sastri placed the turtle in the bucket and send it back to the well.

The next day, the devotees wondered what had happened to the turtle. Shastri's wife once again appeared before them as a possessed woman. "My affectionate devotees! I don't want to see you quarrelling with each other. You should all live in peace. I'm going back to my abode!" The gullible devotees thought that it was the voice of the Lord once again.





THE LIGHTER SIDE

How To Fight Fat?

The Raja of Vajreshwar was fat; so fat that he was unable to walk an inch, by himself. He could only walk with support. Two hefty men walked with him on either side, almost lifting him by his shoulders. In fact, he avoided walking, if he could help it. But every day he had to be present at the *darbar* in the morning and he had to walk from his chambers to the hall.

The courtiers and ministers would assemble first and then await the royal entry. There was a slightly long walk involved, from the entrance to his throne. The sight of the Raja being supported by two men irked both the Raja and the courtiers.

One day, the chief minister ventured to make a suggestion, though he was not quite sure how the Raja would take it. But the

Raja had reposed so much confidence in him that he thought it was only his duty to tell the Raja what he had in mind. "Your Majesty, may I have your permission to say something?" he slowly ventured.

"What's it, Mantriji? Go ahead!" said the Raja. "I hope nobody is coming to wage a war with us!"

"No, Your Majesty, unless of course you would treat it as a battle you're fighting with yourself," the chief minister took some time to come to the point.

"Did you say, fighting with myself?" asked the Raja.

"I suggest, Your Majesty, from tomorrow, you may come to the *darbar* hall before we all assemble, so that you need not appear to be fighting with your fat! Please forgive me if I have put it

bluntly!" Mantriji sounded very apologetic.

The Raja turned the words on his tongue. "No, Mantriji, I like the way you put it—fighting with fat," said the Raja. "True, I have been, in a way, really fighting with myself. Yours is a good idea. I shall proceed to the *darbar* hall first and when I am seated, the guards will make an announcement and then you all can troop in and take your seats. And I shall leave for my chambers only after you all leave."

The chief minister was happy that the Raja did not take his suggestion amiss. "Your Majesty is very kind and understanding," Mantriji reciprocated. "We shall assemble at the portico and come in only after we get a signal from the guards."

That night, the Raja contemplated on the minister's suggestion, as well as his decision, for a long while. There was no physician left in the kingdom who had not tried his treatment on the king to reduce his fat. What his minister had said was true—he was fighting with his fat! Suddenly an idea struck him and he decided to give his courtiers a surprise.



When the chief minister reached the palace the next morning, he found that the courtiers had already gathered at the porch. Whoever went up to the chief minister to find out were only told, they would know more about it when they went in. Soon one of the guards came out. "You may all go in, the Raja is waiting for you."

As they bowed to him before taking their seats, the Raja greeted them with a smile. Earlier, they used to see him exhausted after the strenuous walk and he would not even



glance at them as he walked past them to the throne. When all of them were seated, the chief minister rose in his seat, but the Raja signalled him to resume his seat.

"I wish to make an announcement," said the Raja, taking a quick glance at the people assembled there. "My dear subjects, you have been putting up with my fat all these days, and I feel ashamed I have caused you much inconvenience. I am now announcing that whoever can give me relief will be given a lakh of rupees. If he fails in his

attempt, he will have to suffer for his incapability—even by death, because this fat is slowly *killing* me! Mantriji, you may pass word to all the neighbouring kingdoms. Now let the *darbar* start."

After the *darbar* was over, the chief minister made arrangements for the proclamation. One day passed, none came to accept the Raja's offer. Another day, and yet another day. The *darbar* took place every morning and the Raja would check up with his ministers and courtiers whether there had been any response. There was none even on the fourth day. On the fifth day, the guards at the palace gates had a caller. He introduced himself as physician Ramdas from a distant city. A message was taken to the Raja, and he was called in.

Now Ramdas was a poor physician. He had very few patients going to him and he was finding it difficult to make both ends meet with his meagre income. It was then that he heard of the royal proclamation. One lakh rupees? That should solve his immediate problems, and whatever was saved would serve him in later days also, he



thought. But would he be able to cure the Raja? Well, that had to be thought about, but first let his own problems be set right, he decided.

One look at the Raja, and Ramdas knew he would have to strain his brain to think of a treatment or of a medicine to reduce the Raja's elephantine size. However, the plight of his wife and children back home goaded him to take a risk—any risk for that matter. He accepted the conditions stipulated by the Raja—death, if he failed in his attempt—but demanded the one lakh rupees in advance.

The Raja protested. "I've promised that much money only if I am cured. How can you then demand the entire money in advance?"

"I need all that money to prepare the medicines. I will have to travel a lot to gather the herbs from different places," Ramdas insisted.

"But, what's the guarantee that you'll come back with the medicines, or that your medicines will cure me?" the Raja asked for an assurance.

"I'll take almost three months



to prepare the medicines," explained Ramdas. "I shall be here at the end of three months, Your Majesty, and start my treatment. Well, I am agreeable to being beheaded if I don't succeed."

The Raja finally agreed to Ramdas's proposition. He had waited all these months and years; another three months would not make much of a difference, the Raja consoled himself.

With one lakh rupees in his bag, Ramdas went home. The poor family's life-style suddenly





changed and things began to look up. Every now and then his wife reminded him, "Have you started preparing the medicines?"

"I haven't yet decided on the prescription," replied Ramdas, scratching his head. He was really scratching his head wondering how he would face the Raja at the end of three months. There was one more day left. That night, his wife, children, and neighbours woke up hearing his shrieks and shouts. They found him banging his head, arms, and legs against the pillars and the walls. He had injured himself all

over the body. They could not think of any reason for his strange behaviour. Perhaps he was possessed of some evil spirit. They made him lie down and fanned him to sleep.

The whole of next day he slept like a log. On the ninety-first day, royal messengers were at his door step. He showed them his wounds and bruises and told them that he would need a transport to take him to the palace. The next day, the Raja sent him a palanquin.

As soon as he reached the palace, he told the Raja, "Your Majesty, I was preparing the medicines late in the night when the devil Kala from the nether world appeared before me and asked, 'Whose life are you trying to save?' And when I mentioned your name, he laughed aloud. 'Don't you know he's going to die within a week?' I told him that I had promised to cure you, whereupon he began to beat me black and blue. 'I'll see to it that *you* die first!' I don't know what happened, but I fell into a swoon and woke up after a whole day. Kala must have taken me for dead. I am afraid he's hovering over the



palace, marking his time to carry you away! If that be the case, do you think this poor physician will be able to save you, Your Majesty?" Ramdas fell at the Raja's feet. When he got up, he saw the Raja staring at the ceiling and signalling that he be left alone. Ramdas hurried out of the palace.

The Raja straight away went to his cot and lay down. He was despairing for his life. He refused to drink or eat. One day passed. No *darbar* was held. The ministers gathered in a room next to the royal chambers. The courtiers waited at the portico, hoping that they might be called in any time. Two days. Three days. One whole week passed. The Raja never took even a wink of sleep, as he waited for Kala to make his appearance. But no Kala went to

him even after full seven days. The Raja got up. He felt rather light. He stood up and thought he would try to walk to the ante-room to meet his ministers. Yes! He really made it without any support. He sent the palanquin for the physician, asking him to meet him in the *darbar*.

The *darbar* was in session when Ramdas was ushered in. "Kala seems to have spared me! Was that a kind of treatment you thought for me, Ramdas?" the Raja enquired. The physician merely smiled.

"Here, take it! There is one lakh of rupees more for you! Look me up every week!" The Raja gave him a bag. Ramdas bowed low before accepting the bag, eyes closed. He did not want the Raja to see the twinkle in his eyes.





The Minister's Son

Bhaskaravarma was the only son of the King of Bhasmapuri. The prince's constant companion was Ravikumar, the son of the chief minister. They were thick friends. The prince did not like to be separated from his bosom friend even for a single moment. Ravikumar had great attachment for the prince and was always ready even to sacrifice his life to protect the prince.

The king decided that it was time Bhaskara got married. He chose the princess of Indrapuri as his bride and made arrangements for their wedding which was to take place in Indrapuri. The royal party started, with one palanquin shared by the prince and his friend.

That night they had to camp by the side of the Bhagirathi river. The prince felt tired and went off

to sleep soon. Ravikumar remained awake enjoying the moonlit scenery around. Suddenly he overheard two angelic voices. "Look at that young man asleep!" one of them was telling the other. "In his previous birth, he was a sinner. In fact, he cheated me and spoilt my happiness. I now have an opportunity to take vengeance on him. I shouldn't allow him to live and cheat others. I shall drop my necklace to the ground. When he wakes up, he's sure to pick it up. That very moment, he will die!"

"Suppose he fails to see the necklace?" the other angel asked her.

"Then he won't miss that tempting fruit hanging from that tree. When he takes the first bite, he'll die!"

"In case, he fails to see the



fruit, then?"

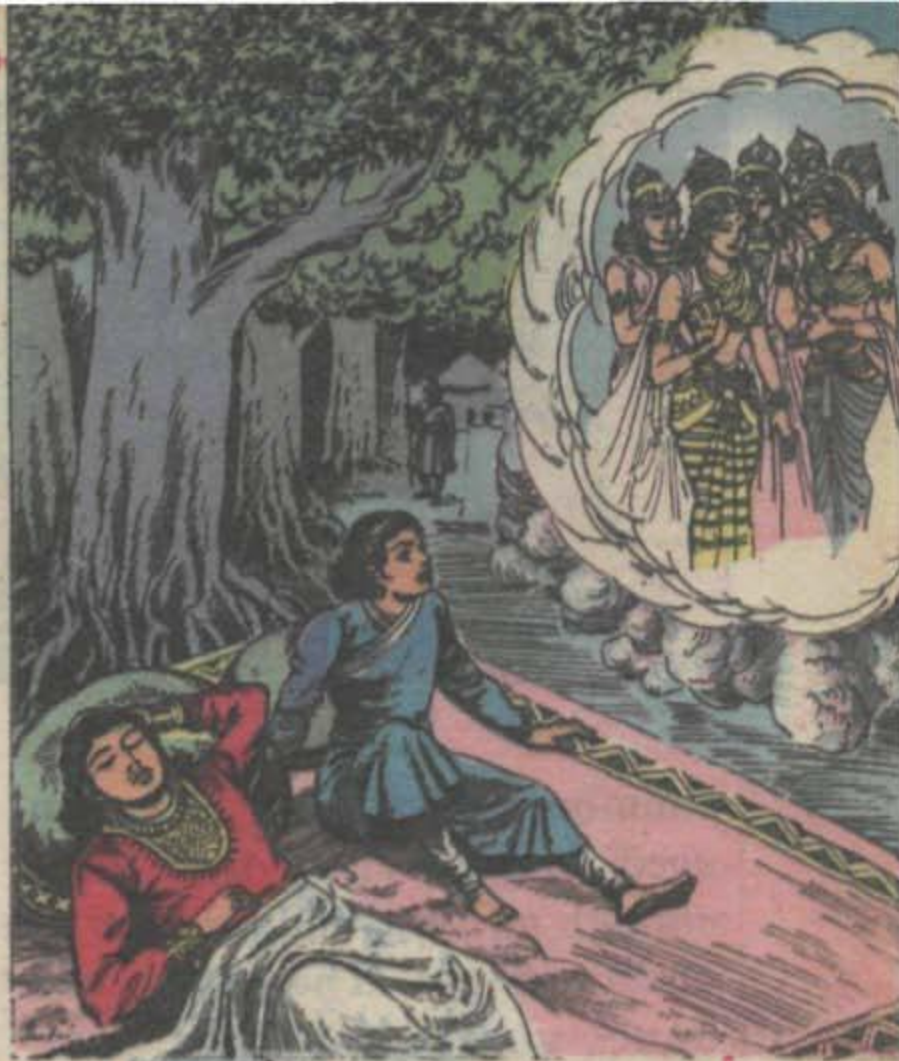
"As he enters the bridal palace, the door will fall on him."

"Suppose that doesn't happen?"

"As he sits on the bed in the bridal chamber, he'll sneeze three times. And unless someone chants 'Long life!' he won't escape death. But, if he escapes all these fateful eventualities, then he won't die for a very very long time! If someone cautions him against all of them, then both of them will die. Once the youth escapes all of them, he can be told about them."

Ravikumar listened to every detail. He could not think of his friend, Prince Bhaskara, ever facing any nemesis. He wanted to save him by whatever means he could think off. So, when the prince got up and was about to pick up the necklace, Ravikumar took it, saying, "Ugh! How ugly!" and threw it into the river.

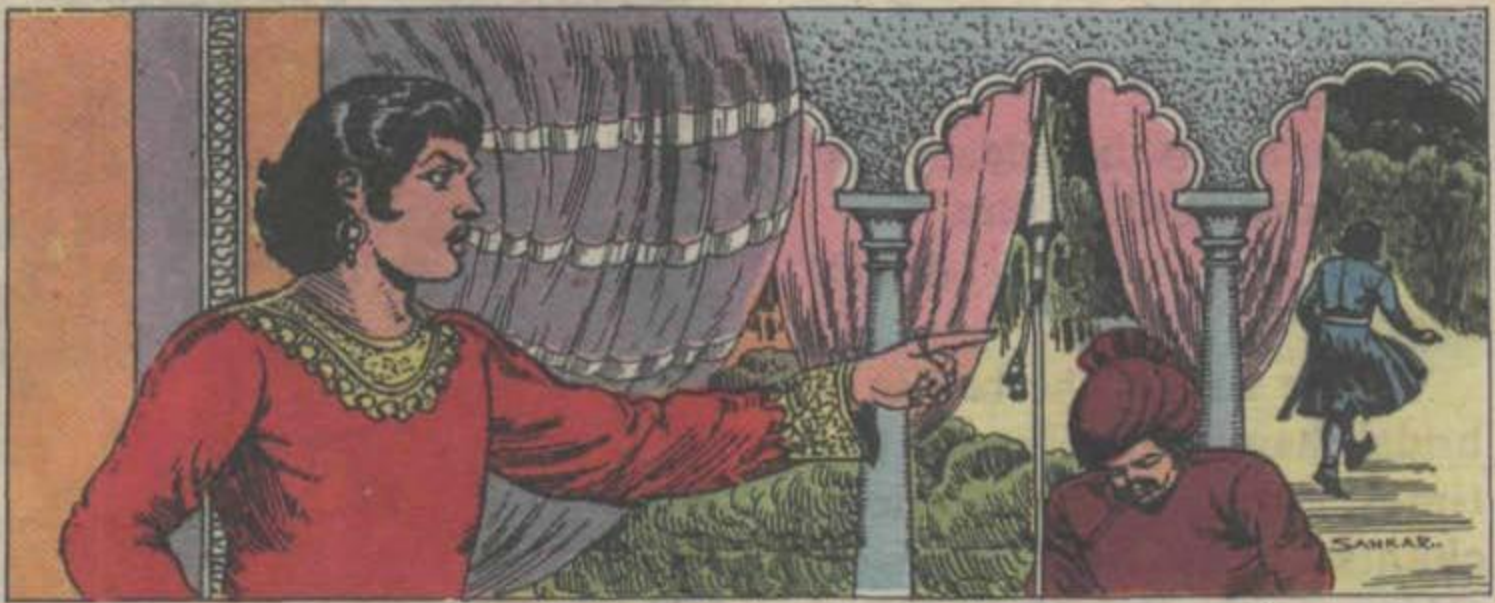
It was then that Prince Bhaskara noticed the ripe yellow fruit. "Come on, let's pluck it and eat it!" Ravikumar warned him. "None of the fruits has been touched by even a single bird. It must be some poisonous variety."



The prince was not given to opposing his friend on anything, so he soon forgot about the necklace and the fruit. They continued their journey to Indrapuri where, as soon as Bhaskaravarma stepped on the threshold of the palace, the main door and the wall around tumbled down in one heap. If Ravikumar, who was watching every movement of the prince, had not pulled him back, he might have been buried alive.

The wedding took place with pomp and gaiety. The prince and his bride entered the bridal





chamber. Ravikumar had managed to gain entry there early enough and was hiding near the decorated cot. The prince suddenly sneezed. "Long life!" exclaimed someone from behind the cot. The prince sneezed a second time and a third time, and the voice said, "Long life!" twice.

The prince suddenly noticed a figure running away from the room. "Thief! Thief! Catch hold of the thief!" he shouted.

The soldiers on guard duty

caught hold of the thief and brought him before the prince. "Oh! It's you, Ravi!" he said, in utter disbelief.

Ravikumar then narrated all that he had heard from the angels. "If I had warned you in advance, we both would have died. Now we're safe, and you'll have a long life!"

Prince Bhaskaravarma held Ravikumar in a warm, affectionate embrace. "You're my true friend!"

Lalita : Is it correct to say that I watered the horse when I give it a drink?

Teacher : Yes, of course.

Lalita : Then, yesterday I milked the cat.



WORLD OF NATURE



A POUCH TO CATCH FISH

The epithet "big-mouthed" is very apt for the Pelican. The lower portion of its beak is a large pouch, which helps the bird to trap fish. These birds mostly live on fish. They employ a clever method to catch them. Pelicans are good swimmers and a "flock" of them swim together. As they swim, they try to drive a "school" of small fish into shallow waters. Once they are cornered, the birds scoop them up in their pouches. One variety found only in North America—the Brown Pelican—can spot the fish even when it flies, and come down in a forceful dive to catch fish even 2 metres below the water surface.

Big prefers small

The biggest of all whales—the Blue Whale—naturally has a big mouth. Surprisingly, this largest animal the world has ever known eats only tiny fishes—like the Krill! The whale swims head on, mouth open, into a "shoal" of krills (incidentally, they look like shrimps), gobbles them up, and a

whole lot of water along with the fish. With the help of its tongue, it then forces out the water through the sieve-like plates on either side of the mouth. The krills are left in the mouth, to be swallowed in less haste!



The gibbon's boom

The main varieties of apes are the Orang-utan, Chimpanzee, Gorilla, and the Gibbon. All apes are capable of walking upright—like man—but it is only the gibbon that *habitually* walks upright. The other three varieties prefer to walk, using all their four legs. The Siamang Gibbon has a peculiarity. It has a rather large throat, which becomes useful when it wishes to make its calls. As it breathes in, the bag-like throat is filled with air, producing a loud boom-boom.



Say "Hello" to text books and friends
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And make new ones. Time to start studying
again. Because there's so much to learn about
the world around you.

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great year in school. And remember to tell us
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CHANDAMAMA
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PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



P.R. Murthy

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for June '93 goes to:-
Miss Veena Ramnath,
No 11, Prayatna, Shivshruti Housing Society,
Chunna Batti, Nehrunagar P.O.
Bombay-400 024

The Winning entry: "Water Fills", "Water Falls".

PICKS FROM THE WISE

Innocence has a friend in heaven.

—Schiller

We must look to the mind, and not to the outward appearance.

—Aesop

Joys are our wings, sorrows our spurs.

—Richer

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